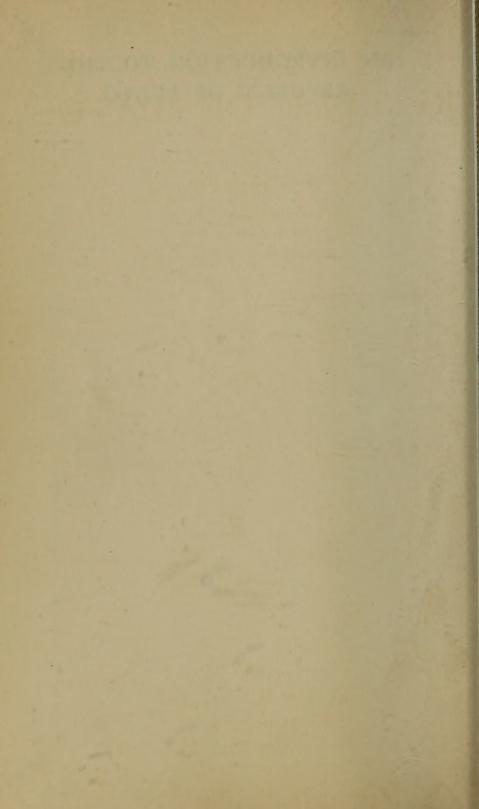


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## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE REPUBLIC OF PLATO





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## REPUBLIC OF PLATO

by William Boyd

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### PREFACE

A CONSIDERABLE part of this book made its first appearance as a course of lectures in connection with the Class of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow University during my tenure of the Euing Fellowship in Mental Philosophy. The kindly reception given to these lectures by my class suggested the thought of giving them a more permanent form. With this in view, I have recast the lectures, revising thoroughly what had already been written, and adding some new sections.

The origin of the book defines its purpose. It is intended in the first instance for the beginner in philosophy who finds Plato difficult, even when read with the help of the excellent expositions of his English commentators. Perhaps it may also appeal to readers who, though not specially interested in philosophy, wish to know something of

one of the great classics of thought. Hence the book makes no pretension to completeness. Questions of interpretation, upon which the advanced student must enter, have for the most part been treated briefly, if at all, and attention has been concentrated on the broad outlines of Platonic doctrine. At the same time, I have tried to avoid giving that illusory impression of finality which the student is so apt to receive in studying a book like the Republic under the guidance of an elementary textbook. An exposition of Plato which does not lead to further study, and above all, to a study of the master himself, must be regarded as a failure. From that condemnation I trust I have saved myself.

In writing a book such as this, one comes under obligations to many authors. I have to express indebtedness to the works of Mr. Nettleship and Professor Bosanquet, and especially to the lectures of the Master of Balliol, by whom I was introduced to the study of Plato in the Class of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow. In making quotations from the Republic I have generally followed the translation of Davies and Vaughan, because their

book was the one most likely to be in the hands of the student. When it has been necessary to amend their translation I have usually guided myself by the translations of Jowett and Bosanquet.

Professor Henry Jones of Glasgow University has added to the many kindnesses which I have received from him since the time I was a student in his class, by reading over the first draft of the book. But for the amendments and additions which I have made at his suggestion, the work would be much less satisfactory than it is. I am also indebted to Mr. S. H. Turner and to Miss Isa Burt for many helpful suggestions and criticisms. I hope that the book is not altogether unworthy of the interest which they have taken in it.

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' SETTLEMENT,

May, 1904.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I PLANNED at one time to revise this little book of introduction to Plato's Republic in the light of the special knowledge and experience acquired since I wrote it, and particularly to attempt a more adequate treatment of those discussions of educational ideals and practice which make the Republic, as Rousseau said, "the finest book ever written on education." But now that the opportunity for the issue of a new edition has come, second thoughts, strengthened perhaps by the call of other tasks, have led me to set aside this plan. Revision with an educational bias would have meant the rewriting of considerable sections, and have altered the character of the book as a whole. It is because I believe that with all its limitations the simple sketch of the leading ideas of the Republic is still likely to be found helpful by a large number of readers, and not because I would not treat the subject differently if I were to revise, that I prefer to let it stand in its original form.

I am the more inclined to this because I have the satisfaction of knowing that the book has been appreciated by the class of students for whom it was written. It found its first (and main) constituency among university students making a beginning with the study of philosophy, and then to my great happiness it proved capable of interesting and instructing studious working men in the problems of ethics and politics. I hope that on its reappearance it will continue to have this double virtue.

Especially am I anxious that it should reach the hands of the workmen students. I have had the privilege of lecturing to a great many of these over a period of years in my own city of Glasgow, and I know that when they get the chance they enter into philosophical inquiries as keenly as into the economic subjects which are the staple themes of adult class study. I know too, from the pleasantest of experiences, that there is no better starting-point for the popular study of philosophy as it bears on the questions of modern social life than Plato's Republic. On three occasions I have given courses of lectures on the Republic, twice to a Citizenship class under Continuation

School auspices, and once to a W.E.A. class, and in each case the interest excited was great beyond all expectation. Something of this may have been due to the romantic appeal made by the little states of ancient Greece, and to the discovery that in spite of all the differences of time and condition the problems of these states which form the background for the argument of the Republic had a good deal in common with the problems of the modern world. But most of all, it was Plato, the poet turned philosopher, dealing with the fundamentals of human behaviour greatly and simply, who put a spell on us all and set us on the way to a clearer view of ourselves and our own times.

In the hope that it may suggest the line to be followed in such study of the *Republic*, I venture to reproduce the outline syllabus of the most recent of the courses mentioned:

The Greek People
Socrates and his Disciples
Plato
The Problem of the Republic

Human Nature and the State

Early Education

Communism

The Citizenship of Women
The Higher Education

Bad Government

The Realisation of the Ideal State

The Immortality of the Soul
WILLIAM BOYD.

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# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE REPUBLIC OF PLATO

### INTRODUCTION.

Section 1.—Plato, the First Great Political Philosopher.

Plato brought to the study of political philosophy an experience such as falls to the lot of few men. Born in a noble Athenian family about 429 B.C., the year in which the great statesman Pericles died, he grew to manhood in the exciting times of the Peloponnesian war. Thus, in the formative years of his life, he was compelled to take part in the great struggle with Sparta which brought Athens, but shortly before at the height of its glory, to the verge of ruin. A catastrophe so overwhelming could not but have a great influence on the youthful Plato. Perhaps we may find in it one of the

reasons for the distrust of democracy which marks all his political thinking. During the war the democracy which Pericles had created had been on its trial, and though the Athenian democracy was good, as Greek democracies went, it had not come out of the ordeal successfully. At any rate, if tradition is to be trusted, his sympathies were with the aristocratic families who took the government of the city in hand after its 1 fall in 405 B.C. But the excesses of the Thirty Tyrants soon showed him that an oligarchy could no more be trusted to govern well than the democracy, and he is said to have welcomed their overthrow. He tried to take a part in I the government of the city under the restored democracy; but his success as a politician was not great, probably because his aristocratic birth made the people suspect him, and he retired from Athens and from politics when the people put his master, Socrates, to death in 399 B.C.

The result of Plato's brief experience of practical politics was an alienation from all existing parties and governments. But he never ceased to be interested in political affairs, or to be a loyal citizen of Athens. It

is reported that on his death-bed he thanked the gods that he had been born an Athenian: and his dying utterance shows the spirit of his life. If he took no part in politics, it was not because he was unwilling to do his duty as a citizen, but because there was no place in the governments of his time for such as he. Instead of doing work for which others were perhaps better fitted than himself, he sought to do his country service by setting forth in his Republic the principles of right government, in the hope that Athens might save itself by reform. And when he found that the ideal state thus represented was too far removed from ordinary life to influence men, he set himself in the last days of his life to construct (in the Laws) a less perfect state which could be more easily realised.

Accordingly, the *Republic* is no arbitrary creation of Plato's fancy. Written to bring about the salvation of his native city, it pulsates with the life of Greece. It is true that his ideal state was like no state that ever had been. But fundamentally it was a Greek city state. Most of its institutions had their prototypes somewhere in Greece; and the main principles

of its government were the principles which underlay the practice of the Greek states. though Plato was dissatisfied with all the governments of his time, as he indicates by constructing an ideal state, his dissatisfaction was not that of the petty mind which can find no good in the actual world. It was the dissatisfaction of one who, in detachment from all parties, could yet enter into their spirit, and appreciate their strength as well as their weakness. Hence his Republic was neither a mere criticism of what had been, nor an empty dream of what might be. In it all that was great and noble in the social life of Athens and Sparta was reproduced, as it only could be reproduced by one who had grasped its inwardness. In this way the value of the Republic is not to be found in the details of its constitution, but in the insight it affords into the meaning of Greek civilisation. And so understood, it can never lose its interest for mankind; for the political problems of the little city states, where men first learned to govern themselves, are not the problems of any one age; and their successes and failures, as interpreted and universalised by the genius

of a Plato, can never cease to be instructive to those who seek to understand the principles of the social life.

### Section 2.—The Dialogue Form of the Republic.

The dialogue form in which the Republic and the other works of Plato are cast, is characteristic of the philosophy of Greece, and, in particular, of the great movement associated with the names of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Socrates, indeed, wrote nothing, but contented himself with giving utterance to his convictions in extempore dialogue with friend and foe. His conversational philosophy contained the Platonic dialogue in germ. After his death in 399 B.C., Plato, who had been his pupil, withdrew from Athens for several years, during which he made the acquaintance of other systems of thought. Finally, in 386 B.c., he returned to Athens and settled down in a garden on the way to Eleusis, where for forty years he discussed philosophy with a a number of choice spirits, who came to learn from him. He was more definitely a teacher than Socrates, and yet not a teacher in the modern sense. His companions were in many

cases men come to maturity of thought: such, for example, was Aristotle. They acknowledged Plato as master, but their own powers of mind were such as to make them not so much learners as co-operators in the work of thought. By the right which his greater breadth and deeper insight gave, he directed their conversations; but they, on the other hand, by criticisms and objections and counterideas, contributed to the final result. And his philosophy, when committed to writing, retained to some extent the character of the discussions in which it first took shape. It is always to be kept in mind that the Socrates of the Republic, who directs the argument by his statements of principle, and who is forced on to more comprehensive views by his hearers' criticisms, was in actual life no other than Plato himself.

The customs of the schools thus suggested the dialogue as the best means of expressing philosophical truth in written form. But Plato had another reason for its use. In the dialogue called the *Phædrus*, he asserts that discussion is the only true way of teaching any subject. He utterly distrusts written discourse: a book,

he says, answers no questions. In the book, conclusions are to be got without the process of thought by which they are reached, and book-learned philosophy may give the appearance of knowledge without the reality. Now, the dialogue, even when written, has the merit of showing thought in the making. It reproduces the gradual process through which the mind, partly by its own efforts, partly by contest with other minds, enters into such completeness of knowledge as is possible for it. The reader never gets ready-made doctrines to be committed to memory as Plato's views. He has to look on and see ideas, which at first seem satisfactory, changing under criticism in the forward movement of the dialogue. And when the end is reached, the results of thought are only his in so far as he has joined in the thinking by which they were reached.

### Section 3.—The "Personæ" of the Dialogue.

The Republic is a complex in which varied elements are combined. The problems of early Greek thought concerning the One and the Many are revived; and new problems, suggested by the influence of the Sophists and by

the decline of Athens, make their appearance. Above all, the new doctrine of ideas, which had been latent in the Socratic method, was now developed and extended by Plato into the first comprehensive philosophical system. The Republic thus demands for its proper interpretation a knowledge of the previous Greek thinkers, and to a less extent of previous Greek history. It must suffice, however, to make a brief reference to the men and parties who enter most prominently into the discussion in the Republic itself. This can best be done by considering the main spokesmen and the opinions which they represent.

The coarse, overbearing buffoon, Thrasy-Machus, who violates the traditions of a Greek gentleman by asking payment for taking part in the debate, is hardly a fair representative of the Sophists. Plato, in fact, had no great liking for the Sophists, whom he regarded as in some measure responsible for the degenerate ways of his fellow-citizens; and though the Sophists who appear in other dialogues include good men, such as Gorgias and Protagoras, whom he respected, Thrasymachus may fairly be taken as Plato's type of the class. Who,

then, were the Sophists? They were a class of public teachers who made it their business to supply the ambitious youths of Greece with a training in the arts of debate, as a preparation for public life. Thus, in the first instance, there was no one set of opinions held by them in common. At the same time, the character of their work tended to produce a certain community of view; for rhetoric required to be supplemented by a training in Ethics and Politics to make it effective for their purpose. Hence the rise of the Sophists was co-incident with a new speculative interest in man's life, both on its personal and on its social side; and their teaching marked the change of interest, on the part of Greek thinkers, from nature to man. They themselves had no small share in effecting this change; and though their work was largely negative and critical, it was the indispensable preliminary to the work of the great constructive thinkers, for, almost by violence, it brought for the first time within the scope of science, man and his institutions. But their importance as thinkers was obscured from their contemporaries by the intense interest of the problems they raised. In the nature of the

case, it could not be otherwise. With the cities in a state of unrest, ordinary citizens could hardly be expected to do justice to the men who seemed to be responsible for the trouble; and even Plato himself is not free from this reaction of feeling.

The nature of their work made a negative point of view almost inevitable. It was their business to teach their pupils how to secure victory in debate; and this made it necessary to find arguments for any position, whether good or bad. With rhetoric thus divorced from conviction, it was a triumph of art to make "the worse appear the better cause." In the outcome, this tended to an all-round scepticism: from the habit of proving that bad things are good, it is only too easy to conclude that after all there is no great difference between bad and good. Hence, though as a matter of business they gave instruction on morals and politics, their views were based on no definite principles. Their scepticism assumed two forms. Primarily it was directed against all powers divine or human that claimed to exercise authority over man as a member of society. Every kind of law or

social regulation was viewed as a human invention, and as such, put in unfavourable contrast with those natural rights of the individual which it limited. In this form, the teaching of the Sophists was obviously av danger to the governments of the little city states, since it encouraged the citizens to set themselves and their rights in opposition to law. And the charge that they corrupted the youth, the same charge as was brought against Socrates, was in this sense not altogether unfair. The second form of scepticism was a kind of sequel to this political scepticism. Finding it easy to get arguments to prove any case, they were not slow to assert that what can be affirmed can with equal right be denied, and that accordingly there is no such thing as truth. The most that can be said is that what a man thinks true is true for him. This is implied in the famous saying of Protagoras that Man is the measure of all things.

In its immediate effects, this sceptical movement was undoubtedly injurious to Athens. At the same time, as has already been pointed out, it rendered no small service to philosophy by forcing men to think of themselves and of their institutions. The traditional views of life had been called in question, and men could no longer hold them in unthinking faith. There were those like Polemarchus in the Republic, who took refuge in the "inspired" sayings of the poets and wise men of the past. But the authority of the poets could no more resist the attacks of criticism than could the traditions of the fathers. Doubt is not to be laid by appeal to any authority, but only by the deeper doubt that gets down to the firm ground of reason.

attempt to meet the difficulties forced on men's minds by the Sophists. By many of his contemporaries he was classed among the Sophists. This mistake was the more easily made because he was as little in sympathy with the traditional views of life as they. But though seemingly a sceptic, scepticism was not the last word of his teaching; for he believed that knowledge was possible, especially in regard to the rules of life. It was this conviction that made him a teacher. He went about Athens ready to talk about moral questions with all sorts and conditions of men. Usually he

began with destructive criticism. If he met anyone, whether common citizen or Sophist, who made pretence of a knowledge he did not possess, Socrates set himself to convince him of ignorance by skilful questioning. But he did not stop short with negations. In shaking his hearers' confidence in their knowledge of life, he sought to bring them to a deeper knowledge which criticism could not affect. For he believed that knowledge was possible if one went the right way about finding it. All particular actions, he taught, have their basis in principles. All just acts, for example, derive their meaning from the idea of justice: the fact that we apply the same term to them all, implies some common character. The man who aspires to be good must find what this common character is. Without the knowledge of it to direct his aspirations, he may do good actions, but cannot be good. This is expressed in the phrase which sums up the Socratic view of morality: "Virtue is knowledge." Accordingly, Socrates sought to make men define to themselves what they meant when in common life they spoke of actions as just or unjust, etc. First of all, he would get the inquirer to

attempt a definition. What is justice? The answer probably takes the form of a list of just But Socrates wants more than this. What is it that makes an act just? Then under the guidance of leading questions, another attempt is made at definition. Socrates shows its inadequacy. Another definition is constructed to meet the objections, again to be criticised, and again reconstructed. So the process goes on till both Socrates and the learner are satisfied, and the definition is pronounced complete. This, in brief, was the Socratic method of definition under criticism. Simple as it was, it contained a profound philosophy, the significance of which is only realised when it is viewed in its relation to the systematic thinking of Plato and Aristotle

It must be noted, however, that the Socrates who leads the discussion in the *Republic* is not the historical Socrates, but Plato himself. Save in the first two books, there is little of the actual teaching or method of Socrates. And yet, though the argument in its course passes beyond what Socrates taught, it is always in the way of development of the Socratic teach-

ing. Socrates had little interest in abstract questions about the nature of knowledge; nor had he formed any definite theory of the state. But as the discussion is worked out along these lines, Plato is seen to be only carrying a step further the idealistic answer, suggested by Socrates, to the Sophistic difficulties. That this was Plato's own view seems to be indicated by his committing the leadership of the discussion in the *Republic* and in most of his other dialogues to his old master.

The only other characters who take prominent part in the discussion are Plato's brothers, Adeimantus and Glaucon. As Plato represents them, they are young men of generous spirit, with a keen interest in philosophical discussion. They are disciples of Socrates, able to follow his expositions closely, and to criticise them intelligently. Every step in the argument is referred to them. If they are satisfied, they assent; if not, they seek further information. At several stages their objections form transitions to new lines of thought. They are, in short, repre-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Note for examples Books II., IV., V., at the beginning of the book in each case.

sentative of the members of the philosophical schools, whose intelligent criticisms help the leader to unfold his subject. To regard them as lay figures, whose only business is to assent to all that Socrates says, is to overlook the fact that the *Republic* is a true dialogue, for the forward movement of which the criticism of the hearers is as necessary as the exposition of the master.

### CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM INTRODUCED: WHAT IS JUSTICE?

Section 1.—The Relation of the Problem to everyday Life. 1

The subject with which the Republic deals is introduced by the question, "What is Justice?" The ordinary man uses such words as justice, honour, goodness, etc., in daily speech without feeling any need for definition or explanation. It is only the thinker who is conscious of the difficulty of definition or explanation, and who finds in them a problem set for him by his unreflecting fellows. This indeed is the peculiarity of moral philosophy. Its subject-matter is provided for it by the common experience of men, and arises out of it. However much it may differ in its conclusions from current ideas about life, it is the truth behind these

ideas that it seeks. Hence, Plato's discussion does not start among philosophers, but in a chance gathering of friends.

"I went down yesterday to the Piraeus with Glaucon, the son of Ariston," says Socrates, "to offer up prayers to the goddess, and also from a wish to see how the festival, then to be held for the first time, would be celebrated. . . . We had finished our prayers, and satisfied our curiosity, and were returning to the city, when Polemarchus, the son of Cephalus, caught sight of us at a distance, and told his servant to run and bid us wait for him." Socrates is persuaded to go home with Polemarchus and his friends. Here a passing reference to justice in a conversation with Cephalus, the father of Polemarchus, leads him to ask what justice is. Cephalus, the good old man, whose whole life has been just and upright, proves unable to give any answer. Socrates neither criticises nor questions. such an experience, even though it can give no account of itself, philosophy must pay its tribute of respect. It is a man of this kind that it wishes to explain, though he himself can give no help towards an explanation.

## Section 2.—The Sayings of the Poets.1

Then Polemarchus falls heir to the discussion. He is a young man of some culture, who is acquainted with the poets and their wise saws, but has not reflected much on life. His youth forbids him the rich experience of his father, and his views on morality are not. his own but those of the great men of the past. Following Simonides, he defines justice as the giving to each man what is due to him. At the suggestion of Socrates, he classes it with the arts. Since, then, all kinds of art, the art of the musician, of the shoemaker, of the ruler, imply both a special knowledge and the skill to use it, it follows from the definition that a good man is one who knows under what circumstances a particular thing is due to another, and is able to render it to him.

Socrates finds it an easy task to criticise this way of stating the case, and brings out its defects in various ways. He shows that there are cases to which it does not apply; that, for example, it is not unjust to refuse

<sup>1</sup> I., 331-336.

to restore a knife to an insane man who would do himself hurt with it. In particular, he attacks the view that makes morality consist in the performance of certain acts, in virtue of a particular knowledge and skill. He shows that justice so understood has no sphere in which it can be exercised. In managing a farm, or selling a ship, or playing draughts, it is not the just man to whom the business is committed, but a man expert in such matters; and so it is in every walk of life. Justice defined apart from moral character is meaningless. Polemarchus is in this way ridiculed into acknowledging his ignorance, and falls back on the view that justice consists in doing good to friends and harm to enemies. Socrates retorts that to harm a man is the same thing as making him a worse man, and therefore, less just. In other words, justice consists in being unjust.

This argumentation has the appearance of being merely verbal, but it is effective enough against Polemarchus and the poets he quotes. Polemarchus is shown not to understand his own principles, and the "inspired" sayings of the poets are proved to be at once vague

and inadequate. Whatever the poets say, justice is more than honesty in regard to property, and morality more than any form of skill.

This wife.

Section 3.—The views of Thrasymachus, the Sophist:

Justice the interest of the Stronger.

Cephalus and Polemarchus, the one the living embodiment of justice, the other learned in the wisdom of the national past, having equally failed to tell what justice is, Plato goes on to consider the opinions of the Sophists, who profess to make such subjects their study.

It has been already pointed out that the Sophists, though in the first instance public teachers and not philosophers, had many ideas in common. In political thought, they were for the most part individualists. Their fundamental contrast was that between Nature and Institution. Those social laws which apply to all men without respect to race or time are laws of nature, and the laws of states are only just so far as they are in harmony with them. But no actual states are just. The existence

<sup>1</sup> See Section 5.

of slavery 1 and the superiority of a ruling class are violations of that primitive equality in which, according to certain Sophists, men were placed by nature. And this inequality which has crept in through law is due to the successful self-seeking of some individual or class. According to some, such laws are made in the interests of the stronger, to enable them to take advantage of the weak; or, as another Sophist maintains, in the interests of the weak, to protect them against the strong. But in both cases, the source of law is self-interest. Both of these explanations of the rise of law are to be found in the *Republic*.

Thrasymachus is put forward, in a passage of much dramatic power, as a representative of the cruder Sophists, to maintain the thesis that justice is the interest of the stronger.<sup>2</sup> By this, he means that governments, being always stronger than their subjects, make laws to suit themselves, and pronounce those who deviate from these laws guilty of injustice. By a subtle turn in the argument, Socrates gets

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The objections to slavery discussed by Aristotle in the Politics were probably those of one of the Sophists.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> I., 336-354.

him to agree that a ruler, in the strict sense of the word, never makes mistakes in regard to what is best for him, or in any other way: that is, a ruler is unworthy of the name if he lacks the capacity for ruling. From the possibility of such mistakes, Socrates leads him on to the admission that there is an art of government just as there is an art of healing, or of horsemanship. The admission is a blunder on the part of Thrasymachus, since it enables Socrates to demonstrate the inconsistency of the view that rulers are guided solely by selfish motives. The interest of an art, Socrates shows, is always found in making an imperfect material more perfect. The healing art, for example, has its interest in trying to put the body right, when it is imperfect because of sickness. The interest of the workman is to do his work as well as possible: he may receive wages, honour, and other benefits as the reward of his work, but the interest of his craft is the work itself, and not the rewards. The doctor who aims at money-making is not a doctor, "in the strict sense of the word," so far as he does so. The application to the case of the ruler is obvious. The interest of the ruler's art no more consists in external rewards than that of the doctor's. The true ruler is he who seeks the welfare of his subjects: so far as he seeks his own interests, and not theirs, he is not a ruler, "in the strict sense of the word."

Though this reasoning silences Thrasymachus for the time, it is not very convincing as an answer to the questions that have been raised. It may be true that if we start from a certain conception of a ruler's functions, as Thrasymachus did, it is inconsistent to hold that justice is the interest of the ruler, because he is strong. But what about the facts of the case? This is virtually what Thrasymachus asks in reply to all that Socrates has said. Ceasing to affect precision in definitions or to attempt an answer to the arguments, he points to the admitted corruption of many Greek governments. Rulers, he says, treat their subjects as shepherds treat their sheep, and seek their own profit at the expense of their subjects. In his opinion the just man is a weakling, whose justice only makes it easier for the unjust man to make him his victim. Sometimes, indeed, injustice when detected receives punishment. But that is only in the case of the petty criminal, who pilfers and cheats in a small way, and is liable to be crushed by the strength of those he offends. When injustice is combined with strength and carried through on a big scale, it is extremely profitable. In this case might becomes right injustice becomes justice. In short, Thrasymachus can see no difference between right and wrong. All actions are prompted by self-interest: successful self-interest is right and just, because it is successful.

Once more Socrates takes exception to the way in which Thrasymachus has expressed his opinion; but after some verbal sparring, he acknowledges that a most important question has been raised. Accordingly, he puts aside the original inquiry about the nature of justice, and deals with the assertion that injustice is more profitable than justice. Does it pay better to be unjust than to be just? This is a delicate question to answer; for it puts the problem of morality in such a way that the moral facts vanish. The man who is good because it pays to be good, is not really good. Socrates manages the question with consummate skill. His answer, briefly stated, is that whether

injustice is profitable or not, it does violence to the soul, for which no gain can compensate. In the argument in which he works out this contention, he rests the superiority of justice over injustice on three grounds. (a) In the first place, he shows that justice is true wisdom. As usual, he falls back the analogy of the arts and crafts. The wise musician, in tuning the lyre, does not go beyond the proper note for the sake of outdoing another musician. In the nature of things, every note has its exact pitch: to make the string either too tight or too loose puts it out of tune, and proves that the tuner is not a good musician. The point here is that the wise craftsman is guided by the law proper to the material with which he works, and errs neither by excess nor defect: his action is based on principle. But as Thrasymachus himself admits, the unjust man is bound by no law. Tried, therefore, by the standard of the crafts, he is unwise. (b) In the second place, justice means strength. No society, Socrates urges, can hold together if its members are bent exclusively on their own interests. There must be honour among

Lieves, if even so elementary a society as a robber-band is to hold together. So, too, if a state is to be stable, there must be a common loyalty and some confidence in one another on the part of its citizens. The result of mere selfseeking would be a struggle of each against all, and in this struggle for individual advantage all order would disappear. Similarly, if in the individual man there were only a chaotic mass of desires and emotions without some governing unity, life would lose its meaning. There must be a ruling principle in the soul to establish a harmony among conflicting desires. For state and individual alike, unity is strength. The existence of the state thus demands justice, and it is strong only when justice flourishes. (c) In the third place, justice is true happiness. This contention is proved by an argument which is famous, because it suggested to Aristotle the distinctive view of the moral life which is the basis of his Ethics. The function of a thing, says Socrates, is "that work for which it is either the sole or the best instrument." The function of the eye is seeing; of the ear, hearing. Further, to

every function there corresponds a character istic excellence. The excellence of the eye, for example, is to see well. What then are we to say about man? Obviously, his happiness can only come in the discharge of his proper function; and this characteristic function being to live, the virtue of the soul will be that which enables it to live well. This virtue is justice, which must therefore bring happiness.

# Section 4.—A second Sophistic view: The Theory of Social Compact. 1

The position taken up by Thrasymachus has proved untenable: but Plato does not seem convinced that the views of the Sophists have been completely met. Glaucon and his brother Adeimantus come forward to express their dissatisfaction with the easy way in which Socrates had overcome Thrasymachus, and undertake to state the case of the Sophists more adequately. They themselves do not sympathise with the Sophists, but they get their views dinned into their ears every day, and they can see no answer to them. Perhaps

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-if they state the popular opinions in their strongest form Socrates may help them to an answer.

In some respects their arguments are the same as those of Thrasymachus—but with a difference. They repeat the question, whether justice or injustice is the more profitable, but they limit it by a distinction that goes to the root of the matter, between things which are good in themselves, and things good because of external results. For Thrasymachus, the distinction had not existed: he had assumed throughout that justice was good or bad, according as it was or was not a means to material prosperity. They, on the other hand, are convinced that justice is a good of the highest kind, good in itself and good in its results. But the common opinion, represented by the teaching of the poets and the practices of religion, is different from this. It values justice only because of the profit and honour that it brings. But, they argue, if justice have only external rewards to commend it, the important thing is not to be just, but to seem just. In this case, the man who gets the most out of life is the man of consummate injustice.

His abilities enable him to be unjust and enjoy the pleasures of a satisfied self-interest, and at the same time, by the appearance of justice, he escapes the penalties of injustice and obtains the rewards of justice. Socrates must therefore show that quite apart from outward results, justice is best for the soul. "Do not content yourself," they say, "with proving to us that justice is better than injustice; but show us that influence exerted by each on its possessor by which, whether gods and men see it or not, the one is in itself a blessing and the other a bane." They thus recall the discussion to the original question: "What is justice?"

It is in the course of this argument that Glaucon puts forward a view of the origin of the state, which in varied forms has exercised a great influence on modern political thought. This is the view that society is based upon an original Social Contract. "Justice," says Glaucon, "stands midway between that which is best, to commit injustice with impunity, and that which is worst, to suffer injustice without

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Compare in particular Hobbes and Rousseau as modern exponents.

any power of retaliating." In other words, justice is a compromise. If a man had the power to ward off the injustice of others, it would be best for him to be unjust. But even the strongest finds himself weak when he sets himself against the world: so all make confession of their weakness by entering into a covenant of mutual forbearance. Each man engages to be just, on condition that others refrain from injustice towards him. \* Laws and contracts are conventions which express this fundamental bargain in detailed form. It is interesting to notice that while according to Thrasymachus the state and its laws were organised in the interests of the strong, Glaucon, starting from the same conception of the individual as self-complete apart from the state, concludes that law arose in the interests of the weak.

What answer can Plato give to the arguments of the brothers? In the extreme case they suggest, the case of the just man fallen upon evil times and suffering contempt as an evil-doer, can it be said that justice is still best? Or is it better to seem just, but to be unjust? Plato gives no direct answer. In a

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way, the whole Republic is his answer. The difficulties raised cannot be laid in a few sentences. They rest upon certain presuppositions about the nature of man and his relation to his fellows, which can only be refuted by working out his own view at length. To this he now proceeds.

## Section 5.—The Fallacies of the Sophists.

Up to the time of the Sophists, the social institutions of man found no place in the speculative thought of Greece. Busied with the world without, the first thinkers had made some progress along the sure way of science, and had discovered the reign of law in Nature. · But the mind of man, with all those manifold social forms in which it expresses itself, was still for them a sealed book. To the Sophists was due the discovery of this strange new world of mind. Coming into the cities of Greece from other lands, they could look on the religion and customs of the people with a freedom not possible for the citizens themselves; and the conclusion to which they came was that religion and customs alike were but human inventions. For when they applied to

society the methods of science, they seemed to find nothing corresponding to the fixity of natural law. Thus they were led to contrast society, as an arbitrary creation of man, with Nature and its laws. In their hands this view of society became a powerful weapon of criticism.

In its application to politics, the antithesis of Nature and Institution, of that which has grown up by Nature and that which owes its being to human artifice, led to the view of society as an aggregate of men who are to all intents and purposes self-complete, apart from their social relations. Up to this time, the individual as such had counted for nothing in Greek politics; the only rights recognised as his due were the rights he enjoyed as a member of the state or of the family. But this new conception of society as artificial and external to its component members gave him standing in his own right. It implied that the social unit was the individual, who as such was endowed with certain natural rights not Hence arose that derived from the state. sharp antithesis between state and individual which led the Sophists to represent all power

acquired by the state as acquired at the expense of the individual. On such a view, any law to which every citizen had not given his consent was regarded as an outward coercion, only to be tolerated because of its usefulness in restraining the worse evil of unlimited self-assertion.

That such a separation between the state and individual should be made was essential. if any advance beyond the Greek city was to take place; and the onesidedness which of necessity marked the claims made on behalf of the individual by the Sophists, had its value in forcing the problem into the region of practical politics. Once the old relations between the state and its subjects had been challenged, profound changes were inevitable both in theory and in practice. On the side of theory, it compelled the thinkers of Greece to undertake a thorough examination of the nature of the state and its relation to the citizens: the immediate result was the Republic of Plato, and the Politics of Aristotle. On the side of practice, it laid on statesmen the task of giving the citizen a greater freedom and individuality without endangering the state. Greece herself made but little progress towards the solution of the practical problem; it is only in the modern nation state that the interests of state and individual have been more or less successfully reconciled.

It is easy enough to see the fallacy of the Sophists' position: by over-emphasising the antithesis of individual and state, they reached wrong conclusions about both. In attacking the state as artificial, and making the basis of social life the natural rights of the individual, they thought of the individual as selfcomplete apart from his fellows. Not content with asserting that the citizen had an individuality which was not satisfied within the narrow limits of a Greek state, they thought of him as by nature independent of any state. V Thus they were led, as some modern philosophers have been led, to picture to themselves a time when men were not banded together, but lived by themselves in the full enjoyment of freedom and the other rights of nature. To the question why these primitive freemen first took upon themselves the bonds of society, the only answer possible on these premises was that in some way they had been forced into it, that

with or without their own wills they had come to some kind of understanding or agreement to live together.

Now, this whole view of society rests on a bad foundation; it presupposes that man, as he occurs in society, would not be essentially different from what he is, if he had never been in society. The truth is that the self-complete individual is a fiction, both for history and for philosophy. If, by the help of comparative science, we try to picture to ourselves the time when there was no organised society, what we get is not man, but an animal of whom little can be said. This individual certainly cannot be credited with any rights, since all man's rights come into being and continue to exist only in so far as he is a member of some community. If it be asserted, for example, that he enjoyed freedom, the answer must be that the term is being used in quite a different sense from that in which it is applicable in a social context. The citizen who claims a greater freedom does not ask exemption from all law. He only asks that the law should be such that he can discharge his functions as a member of society without any conflict between the outward and the inward law. In short, it is only by supposing that those ideas of right and wrong which have been created by the evolution of society existed before society, that we get the idea of the self-complete individual. The same error is involved in explaining society as having its origin in contract. The explanation owes its plausibility to the fact that the mutual understanding which must exist among the members of a community may be loosely expressed by the analogy of a contract. But there could be no contract at the beginning of social life, because the making of a contract presupposes on the part of the contracting parties not only powers of intelligence and will, but also common sympathy, all of which only come into existence in society. A contract to keep contracts is thus an absurdity.

To return to Plato. What answer does he give to the Sophists? In a sense, the whole Republic is his answer. To the individualism of the Sophists he opposes an organic view of society. Again and again he insists that the state is truly natural. The fundamental

principle throughout the discussion (especially in Books II.-IV.) is that the state is not an alien power which men by some accident have created, but the outward expression of the mind of man, without which man would not be man. "Many learned men," he says, in the Laws,1 "say that the elements and inorganic and organic world below man came by nature and chance, but that law and justice and man's works and social institutions and religion are merely conventional, variable, and untrue. But we must maintain that law and religion and man's works exist by nature, or are not lower than nature, being the products of mind according to right reason." ... "For they give the name of nature to the origin of the earliest things; but if really mind is the earliest of all things, then it may rightly be said to be superlatively natural." The state, then, expresses the mind of man, and like mind, not less but more than nature, it shows the reign of law. Hence the state is for Plato the superlatively natural, and man, as Aristotle said, "is, by nature, a social animal."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Laws, 889 seq. I give the quotation as abridged in Mr. Bosanquet's "Philosophical Theory of the State."

## CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE IDEAL CITY

Section 1.—The Individual seen in the "Larger Letters" of the State.

GLAUCON and Adeimantus made the demand that in order to avoid confusing justice in its own nature with such accompaniments of it as reputation and honour, for which it is usually praised, Socrates should deal with it only as it affects the inner life of man. Taken strictly, the demand cannot be met. It requires that justice, which derives its meaning from a man's social relations, should be treated apart from these relations; and Socrates tacitly declines the question in this form. By an argument,1 which in a sense begs the question, he shifts his ground. Suppose, he says, we had been called on to read small writing at a distance, and that we had discovered that the same writing was to be found elsewhere in larger

<sup>1</sup> II., 368, 369.

characters, we should read the latter first, and with their help make out the smaller. Then he applies the simile. We speak of a city as just in the same way as we speak of a man as just. If, then, we can discern the character of justice as it appears on a large scale in a state, we shall understand it the better in the individual man.

Though his hearers raise no objections to the application of the term "just" to a city. Socrates, by its use, has implicitly made the transition from a mechanical to an organic view of the state. To credit a city with moral qualities, such as justice, bravery, and the like, implies that it is a unity—one might even say a personality—made so by common sentiments and will. It is the same human nature which shows itself in the individual as in those social institutions which are the outward forms by which the inner life of the soul is made manifest. Hence we may find in the larger letters of the social relationships clues to the nature of the soul.

## Section 2.—The Origin of the City State 1

Plato<sup>2</sup> holds it necessary to see justice as it appears in a state. He does not choose, however, to look for it in any actual state, but sets himself to trace the origin and development of an ideal state. The reason may perhaps be found in the fact that while all states have certain common characters, without which they would not be states, any one state shows these characters combined with and modified by the accidental features which differentiate it from other states. The account of the origin of society which he gives is therefore not to be taken as historical.8 He wishes to give such an analysis of the classes in a state and their mutual relations, as will enable him to find out in what sense it can be characterised as just. It is accordingly psychology rather than history which deter-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> II., 369-374.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Up to this point the distinction of the characters taking part in the dialogue has been maintained, because a considerable interest attached to the actual discussion. But the interest after this is rather in the ideas than in their form. They will accordingly be referred to Plato, not to Socrates.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the Laws, Book III.

mines the order of events in his construction of a typical community.

For this reason he takes man and society alike at their lowest points—man as the creature of physical wants, society as a means for the satisfaction of these wants. "The formation of a city," he says, "is due to this fact, that we are not individually independent, but have many wants." This is his first point. Man is not self-sufficient. He needs the help of his fellows to satisfy even the needs caused by appetite, and much more, as is shown later, for the satisfaction of higher wants. The complementary fact is that other men need the individual as much as he needs them, since he is able to supply them with something which they lack. "No two persons," he says, "are exactly alike, but each differs from each in natural endowments, one being suited for one occupation and another for another." This is the principle of the division of labour, the principle that each man has a special fitness for some one occupation, and does his best work by devoting himself to it. The two facts when put together suggest the idea of the state organic unity of reciprocally helpful parts,



each one of which is needed to make up the whole. Here then we have a first disproof of the view that the order of society is contrary to nature. Since it is the unlikeness of men and the diversity of their gifts which bind them together in society, society is not an artificial creation, but rests on nature itself. Thus the individualistic view of man breaks down, even in the most obvious and elementary social

relations.

For the sake of simplicity, Plato assumes that it was the need of food and clothing which first made an organised society necessary. But he is well aware that human wants are never confined to such material things, and that a city entirely devoted to supplying them would be but a fragment of a state. He characterises the city, as he first sketches it, as a community of swine. Accordingly, by way of an advance, he adds to the artisans and merchants who made up the original company of workers a soldier or ruler class, whom he calls guardians. account of this development is interesting and suggestive. The desire for something better than a bare livelihood leads the citizens to

indulge in luxuries; and these luxuries can only be obtained by an increase in revenue and in territory. The city is in this way brought into unfriendly relations with neighbouring states, and acting on the principle of the division of labour, needs to keep a standing army of trained soldiers for purposes of offence and defence. Here then we have the first grouping of the citizens in two classes: ordinary citizens engaged in the menial offices of production, and guardians, whose duty it is to look after the state. The rise of a governing class is a notable stage in the history of the community; for, Plato seems to suggest, it is in the relations of rulers and subjects that law and morality first Vtake definite form. Thus it is to the discipline of war, which is the reason for the existence of a ruling class, that Plato traces the beginnings of the civilised state.

#### Section 3.—The Workers.

The city of Plato's imagination began its career as a band of mutually helpful workers. But, as we have seen, he is hardly disposed to admit that such a union of men is a state

at all. The fundamental condition for a proper vestate is the existence of a ruling class, distinct from the common people who are engaged in the labour of the community. Plato finds this distinction in the nature of things. Men, according to his view, fall into two classes: those who are fitted by their abilities for ruling, and those who are unfit. It is true that now and again there may appear among the subject workers an individual of superior powers, worthy to be elevated to the dignity of a ruler, just as it may happen that some of the upper class will need to be degraded; but for the most part, there is a great gulf fixed between the two classes.

In thus emphasising the difference of the higher and lower classes, Plato shows the prejudices of the Greek aristocrat. Like most warlike nations, the Greeks despised manual labour, partly because they looked upon it as rendering the workman unfit for military and political service, partly because it was associated in their minds with the work of slaves. The workman and the merchant, all men engaged in producing the necessaries of life for others, were characterised as "banausoi," a

term suggesting that their work had more or less distorted their characters and rendered them incapable of living the best kind of life. In Thebes, for example, a merchant could not enjoy citizen rights until he had retired from the market for ten years. Even the great philosophers shared in this sentiment. According to Aristotle, the labourer, whether slave or "banausos," cannot be a producer of virtue, and is therefore debarred from any share in the life of the state. Similarly, though the workers of the Republic are reckoned citizens, they are ignored from beginning to end. Plato's whole concern in the planning of the ideal city is that the guardians should be properly selected and trained. With proper guardians to protect and control them, the people may be left to their own devices.1

The contrast between Aristotle and Plato in their views about citizenship is very interesting. Aristotle debars from citizenship all who by reason of sex or occupation cannot take their full share in the best life of the state; thus excluding traders, workmen, and slaves, as well as women of every degree. Plato, on the other hand, regards everyone, without respect to sex or occupation, as capable in some measure of citizenship, but reserves the best life and training for the guardians.

#### Section 4.—The Guardians and their Auxiliaries.

In the first accounts of the state, the guardians were described as both soldiers, and governors. But the obvious differences between fighting and ruling suggest a division of them into two classes, named respectively auxiliaries and guardians proper. The guardians proper are the old and tried men, who have proved themselves fit to manage the state. The auxiliaries, as the name implies, are the younger men, subordinate to the guardians proper. Their business is to do the fighting of the state, to suppress disorder within, and to repel attack from without. And service in their ranks is a necessary preliminary to the higher work of a guardian. Only those who have shown the proper character as soldiers are promoted to the rank of rulers.

The qualifications of the complete guardian are variously stated in the course of the discussion. In the first selection of guardians, the qualities set down as marking the proper men are strength and bravery and a spirit that combines sternness in war with gentle-

ness in ruling. When Plato comes to divide the guardians into a higher and a lower class, he insists on loyalty to the state as the principle of selection. "We must select from the whole body of guardians those individuals who appear to us, after due observation, to be remarkable above others for the zeal with which through their whole life they have done what they thought advantageous to the state, and inflexibly refused to do what they thought the reverse." 1 At a still later stage, when the question arises whether the ideal state can ever be realised, Plato answers that it can, if the guardians be philosophers.2 A love for philosophy and loyalty to the interests of the state are then the qualities required of the perfect guardian.

It is important that the guardians should be good men. Cobblers, and potters, and farmers may be incompetent and worthless without danger to the state; but under bad guardians the state will go to ruin. On the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> III., 412.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Plato states at some length the qualities of the philosopher which fit him to be ruler, in VI., 484-486. It is in this passage that he speaks of the philosopher as "the spectator of all time and all existence."

guardians depend public prosperity and happiness. Their work 1 is to superintend everything that goes on in the state, and see that every one does his proper work. They must guard carefully against any lowering of the standard of capacity among the ruling class. Hence they will degrade any inferior child born among the guardians, and raise to guardian rank any child of special gifts born in the other classes. For the same reason they will keep careful watch over the education of the youth, and in particular, they will resist any innovation in the means of educa-v tion. Another of their duties will be to regulate the size of the state and its territory. The city must not be too small, and yet must not be allowed to grow too big: "so long as the city can grow without abandoning its unity, up to that point it may be allowed to grow, but not beyond it." In the regulation of the affairs of the lower classes, Plato leaves them a large measure of freedom. They are to prevent excessive poverty and excessive / wealth, because both conditions degrade the artisans and their work. Poverty produces

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> IV., 424, 425.

meanness and inferior workmanship; wealth leads to luxury and idleness. But beyond this general regulation, the guardians are left to their own discretion. "As to these common business transactions between private individuals in the market, including, if you please, the contracts of artisans, libels, assaults, law-proceedings, and the impanelling of juries, or again, questions relating to tariffs, and the collection of such customs as may be necessary in the markets or in the harbours, and generally all regulations of the market, the police, the custom-house, and the like; shall we condescend to legislate at all on such matters?" And the answer is that such matters require no special legislation, if the guardians have been properly trained.

Plato attempts to ensure the efficiency of the guardians in two ways: in the first place, by making them undergo a systematic education, beginning with music and gymnastic, and leading up to philosophy; and in the second place, by abolishing family life and private property. These subjects will be discussed at some length in later chapters.

# CHAPTER III

WHAT JUSTICE IS

#### Section 1.—The Virtues of the Perfect State.1

Plato having now completed his account of the founding of the state, returns to the problem of the true nature of Justice. Where is Justice to be found in this state? In the first place, he asserts as though it were a commonplace which no one would call in question, that the state being "perfectly good" must possess four, and only four virtues-Wisdom, Courage, Temperance, and Justice. And the argument by which he reaches the definition of Justice appears to be based on the assumption that virtue can be completely classified under these four cardinal forms. It might seem, therefore, that if we refuse assent to this proposition, either on the ground that the virtues, being as various as the relations of life, do not admit of complete classification, or that Plato's list is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> IV., 427-434.

incomplete from the omission of virtues like humility, the argument can have no significance for us. But, as a matter of fact, the argument does not really depend, save in form, on the assumption of completeness. For the list of virtues is based on the relation of the constituent classes of the state, and so the argument ends by demonstrating the nature of justice from the constitution of the state, and justifies the list of virtues which it assumed for a beginning. We may therefore take without further question Plato's four virtues, and follow his attempt to find them in the state.

(a) Wisdom—What makes a state wise? Carpenters and farmers have a wisdom or knowledge in matters that concern their own trades, but the state is not wise because it has good carpenters and farmers. The knowledge that makes a state wise, is knowledge about the state as a whole; and this wisdom resides in the guardians, who alone have a clear idea of what is needed for the common weal, and are able to regulate the internal and external relations of the community. Wisdom, in the sense in which the word is applied to a

state, is thus the special virtue of the rulers. The state is wise in so far as the men at the head act wisely on its behalf,

- (b) Courage—The courage of a state is to be found in its army. Soldiers are not the only brave men in the state, but they are the state's representatives when fighting has to be done, and the state is brave or cowardly according to the measure of their courage. But courage means more than bravery on the field of battle; for such bravery may be but the ignorant instinct of the beast or the slave. The soldiers of the ideal state must have the higher bravery of character which education brings. They must know what the real danger is, and bear themselves well in the face of it. In short, bravery in battle is but one form of a higher virtue, which may be styled sense of honour or moral courage. With soldiers who have this courage, the state is brave.
- (c) Temperance—Temperance or Self-control is, in a way, the characteristic virtue of the workers, and is displayed by them in obedience to superiors. But since they are unfit to control themselves, it is at best a negative virtue which they show in allowing

themselves to be controlled. Therefore, instead of calling it the virtue of the workers, it should more properly be called an agreement or harmony among the classes. By way of illustration, Plato refers to the paradox involved in speaking of a man as "master of himself." "For," he points out, "the man who is master of himself will also be the slave of himself." The explanation, he thinks, is that in the self there are two parts, a higher and a lower, one to rule, the other to obey. So there are to be found in society the same two parts, and temperance consists in the general recognition that it is the right of the superior to rule, and the duty of the inferior to obey. Accordingly, a state may be said to be temperate when the ordinary citizens willingly submit to the rulers, and there is harmony of classes. But while temperance is primarily the virtue of the masses, it is no less required of the soldiers. Though they are more akin to the guardians, they lack wisdom. Hence the interests of the state require that they also should be temperate and submit to the rule of their elders. In this way we get an ascending scale of class virtues. The sole virtue of the artisan is temperance; the soldier

adds to temperance valour or sense of honour; while the guardian combines with the lower virtues, the highest of all, true wisdom.

(d) Justice—So far only three of the virtues have been accounted for, and justice has not vet been found. Obviously, it is not to be sought in any one class. If it is to be found at all, it must be in the relationship of all the classes. It must be that virtue which underlies all the others, and which is only difficult to recognise because it is so familiar. So Plato finds the definition of justice at last in a phrase in common use, which urges every man to do his own business, his business being that work for which he is fitted by capacity and education. Thus, the just state is that in which all the citizens perform the duties of their station without interfering with other men's work. Justice is therefore not a special virtue, not

¹ Plato expands his definition a little later to make it denote not only doing one's own business, but also having what is one's own. In this way justice comes to include the justice of the law court. It is along these lines that Aristotle develops the idea of justice by distinguishing general justice (that is, obedience to law, virtue in its social aspects) from a particular form of it, which may be called fairness, shown in taking one's proper share of outward goods. Under the latter he brings the discussion of contracts, civil injury and crime.

one virtue among others, but the foundation principle of all the virtues, the common spirit which unites all classes into one social body, and makes all their work means to a common end.

A just state thus implies, on the one hand, such an organisation of classes that each citizen can find in it the place for which his abilities fit him; and, on the other hand, such devotion to the state that everyone does willing service in that place. Under these conditions, the common spirit of justice manifests itself in the special forms of wisdom, bravery, and temperance, according to the particular duties of a class. In other words, if a state be just, its rulers cannot but be wise, its soldiers cannot but be brave, there cannot but be agreement among the different classes. Plato in this way

If it be kept in mind that Temperance is one of the forms in which Justice shows itself, the difficulty which is sometimes found in distinguishing Temperance and Justice disappears. Justice requires every man to do his own work in the spirit of whole-hearted devotion to the state. But if the work of all is to contribute to a common result, there must be agreement between rulers and subjects that the one class is to direct the work, the other to do it under direction. Justice shows itself both in this acceptance of the conditions under which the work is to be done and in the doing of it. The former phase of Justice receives a special name, Temperance.

gives to the special virtues both an individual and a social aspect. On the part of the citizen, they are the expression of character: they are the outcome of that willingness to devote himself to his proper work, in which justice consists. From the point of view of the state, they derive their moral value from their relation to the common weal. We are here on the borderland between Ethics and Politics: but for Plato the two provinces overlap. Save in the case of the philosopher who in the life of contemplation is carried beyond his civic duties and finds the law of his life in reason, Plato knows no virtues except those which rise out of a man's relation to the state. Thus for him justice is the most comprehensive name for virtue, and every virtue is a form of justice. This point of view, as we shall see at a later stage, receives most striking illustration in the proposal to take away all private possessions from the guardians to ensure that entire devotion to the state, in which Plato thinks justice consists.

### Section 2.—The Just Man.1

From the just state, Plato passes to the consideration of the just man. The state, as he asserted at the beginning of the discussion, is the individual man, writ large. Its constitution depends ultimately on the individuals of whom it is composed, and those characters which he has seen in large outline in the state he finds, for that reason, repeated in the soul. Thus there corresponds to the threefold division of a state a like division of the soul.2 (a) The appetites are the lowest element. Under the term are primarily included the so-called bodily desires; but the desire for wealth is also considered a form of appetite. The appetites correspond to the artisan class, and like it, must be kept in order. (b) The second element Plato calls "thumos," a word which may be translated "ambition" or "spirit." It is "thumos" that makes a man ready to resist any invasion of his rights, and impels him to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> IV., 435-445.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The correspondence between the classes of the state and the elements of the soul is supported by an interesting piece of psychological analysis, for which, however, the reader must be referred to the *Republic* itself. IV., 435-441.

competition with his fellows. It may be called the self-assertive tendency. It is not rational, but is capable of being made rational by discipline. When it is rationalised, it co-operates with reason in ruling the passions. Its analogue in the state is the soldier class, superior to the artisans, and when guided by the rulers, able to help in keeping the artisans in order. (c) The third and highest element is the governing reason, the rational part of the soul. In general, it is intelligence which begins in wonder, and rises to science and philosophy. Here Plato characterises it in contrast to the desires, as that which opposes their aimless impulses, and seeks to control and unify them. The corresponding factor in the state is the governing class.

With this scheme of mental parts before us, it is easy to see the meaning of the several virtues as they appear in the individual soul. The wise man 1 is dominated by reason, and

Though the place each man takes in the state depends on whether he is predominantly wise or brave or submissive, no man is altogether devoid of any of the virtues. Even the worker must have a wisdom and a courage of a kind. Thus morality—that is, from Plato's point of view, justice—as it appears in the individual, implies not merely the faithful

knows what is the real interest of his whole The brave man is faithful to the principles imposed by reason, in the face of all temptations, including those that come from pleasure or pain. The temperate man is he whose passions are under control, not, however, by coercion, but because there is a harmony of the higher and lower parts of his soul, the one ruling, the other submitting freely to be ruled. To sum up all, the just soul is that in which each part does its proper work, which is wise and brave and temperate, and which consequently has the harmony of a perfect unity. The just man, being free from conflict within the soul, has his whole being directed to one end. This is the true justice, of which the justice of the state is but an image: for the constitution of the state depends upon the nature of the soul, and political justice is but the outward expression of that inward harmony of soul in which true justice consists.

The conclusion which Plato draws from the discussion is that "Virtue is a kind of health

performance of citizen duties, but the regulation of the elements of the soul in view of the business of life.

and beauty and good condition of soul." Injustice, involving a strife in man's nature, is a disease and deformity. There is no need, therefore, to discuss the question whether justice or injustice is the more profitable. Just as bodily disease makes life miserable in spite of the best meats and drinks, so life is no longer worth living, however agreeable its interests, when the soul has been corrupted by injustice.

## Section 3.—Plato's Psychology.

In the account of the virtues which has just been discussed, Plato for the first time gives to Ethics a psychological foundation. But Plato has no ready-made psychology. When the investigation of any subject calls for psychological analysis, Plato works out as much psychology as the occasion requires. Thus there falls to the interpreter the task of bringing many fragments together and making a whole out of them. It must suffice here to examine briefly the psychology of the *Republic*.

The fundamental problem of Plato's psychology is the relation of body and soul; it rises out of the question whether the soul

is really a unity. On analysis, Plato finds in the soul three inconvertible elements—reason. spirit, and the desires. This tripartite division is most carefully demonstrated in the passage which has just been discussed. He shows there by a consideration of certain typical cases of mental conflict that the attitude of the soul in reasoning is quite distinct, on the one hand, from its attitude in the emotional impulse he calls spirit; and on the other, from its attitude in desiring. Impulse or desire, for instance, may prompt the soul in directions that reason disapproves. Hence he concludes that since the soul finds itself in distinct and contradictory relations to the same objects at the same time, there must be three different elements in the soul. The distinction of parts thus established is emphasised again and again in other dialogues. It is pictured in the Phaedrus, for example, in the striking comparison of the soul to a charioteer guiding two horses, reason directing both the spirited impulse and the desires.

But how is this diversity of parts within the soul to be reconciled with its unity? In the Fourth Book of the *Republic*, where Plato is guided by the analogy of the state which retains its unity in spite of class differences, the solution is found easily enough. The soul is made one by the supremacy of reason, which allies spirit with itself and organises the multiplicity of desires. But this solution is not altogether satisfactory, because it implies that the desires are not alien to reason; and this, in the first instance at least, Plato would not have admitted. Having started with a dualistic separation of soul and body, he could not easily find any but an external relation between reason and the lower elements which the soul seemed to owe to its alliance with body. The same difficulty reappears in the Republic in other forms. In the course of the discussion of immortality in Book X.,1 Plato is forced to ask again whether the soul is one or many. At this point, his answer is got by regarding the love of wisdom as the essential characteristic of the soul. "That which is made up of many parts," he says, "cannot easily be eternal." Accordingly, he finds the explanation of the soul's apparent multiplicity in the fact that it has been marred

<sup>1</sup> X., 611.

by its association with the body. This same dualistic opposition of reason and the other elements of the soul is to be found in an interesting contrast between wisdom and the other virtues, which occurs in the Seventh Book: "While the other so-called virtues of the soul seem to be akin to the body, being infused by habit and exercise, and not originally innate, the virtue of wisdom pertains to something more divine." 2 Taking the various passages in the Republic into account, we may say generally that Plato cannot yet free himself from this dualism of body and soul. It is not till we come to the Philebus, which is of somewhat later date, that we find an advance. In this dialogue, Plato has reached the conclusion towards which we see him making in the Republic, that there is no unity which does not include multiplicity, and in particular that

VII., 518.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The passage from which the quotation is taken is of interest as showing a development of the Socratic doctrine that virtue as knowledge is teachable. Plato modifies the doctrine by saying that while the other virtues can be taught, the virtue of wisdom or thought is native to the soul and cannot be taught; it only requires to be directed rightly. The teaching of Temperance and Courage is essential, to prevent Thought being disturbed and misdirected.

the passions and desires have their origin not without, but within the soul. He thus reaches a division of the mind (not unlike that of Aristotle) into that which possesses reason and that which partakes of reason. As we shall see at a later stage, the same difficulty about the one and the many, which has been discussed in relation to the psychology of ethics, rises in connection with knowledge. Instead of the opposition between reason and the desires, there is the opposition between the unity of the ideas and the variety of the world as given by the senses. And Plato works through the difficulty in much the same way, beginning with opposition and discovering unity in difference.

# CHAPTER IV

#### THE FIRST EDUCATION OF THE GUARDIANS

Section 1.—The Two Educations.

Plato's division of classes in the state rests on a difference in the capacities of men. The men of richer natures, the brave and the wise, are set over the mass of men as their rulers. It must not be thought, however, that the possession of special qualities is in itself a qualification for ruling. The man of talents must get his talents trained and developed. Hence Plato proposes a scheme of training to fit the selected men for their office. He does not trouble himself about the education of the workers: it is only the rulers whose business in life demands education.

In his view of Education, Plato makes a considerable advance on the Socratic notion of goodness. Virtue, according to Socrates,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The environment of beautiful things by which the souls of the guardians are to be trained would of course influence the workers also, but that is no part of Plato's plan.

is knowledge. Before a man can do that which is good, he must know what the good is; and if he knows the good, he must do it. With this, Plato is in general agreement. Goodness must be a matter of principle, and therefore of knowledge. But he differs from Socrates in thinking that goodness admits of higher and lower forms, and that though a man may not be good in the highest sense, he may yet have a kind of goodness. This inferior goodness is that which results from a training in good habits, and it is inferior because it does not rest on any clear knowledge of what the good is. And yet it is goodness, since the higher goodness of principle is only possible through the formation of good habits and impulses by means of education.

It is important to call attention to this distinction between the lower and the higher forms of goodness; for on the basis of it, Plato gives two educational systems. The first of these is that appropriate to the youth of those selected to be rulers, and it extends from birth to manhood about the age of twenty. Its distinguishing feature is that it

appeals to imagination rather than to reason; and the goodness it seeks to induce is not a reasoned goodness, but the goodness of habit which has been formed by discipline. The second education is only given to those whose conduct during the first education has shown them to be of philosophic disposition. It consists in the study of Science and Philosophy, and goes on more or less throughout life. It is not treated till Books V.—VII.

## Section 2.—Athens and Sparta.

In working out the details of the first education, Plato took as his models the contemporary Greek states, and especially Athens and Sparta. These two states represented in extreme forms two diverse tendencies in Greek life. Sparta was a city of soldiers. Even in times of peace, the common life was as rigorous as the life of the camp. Its citizens were kept in the best physical form by constant drill and exercise, and the conditions of life were made as hard as possible to prepare them for the hardships of war. The state called for the absolute devotion of the citizen, and ordered his life in minute detail. "Nowhere else in

Greece was the individual so completely subjected to the state: the time when he was to marry, the education of his children. the clothes which he was to wear, the food which he was to eat, were all prescribed by law." (Jowett.) The chief defect of the system was the small place given in it to the higher graces of life. The citizens were splendid fighting men, but intellectually coarse and dull. In Athens, on the other hand, the defect lay in the opposite direction. The extension of the Empire had given a strong impulse towards culture and intellectual activity; but this culture was not accompanied by the stability of character which the maintenance of the Empire demanded. The Athenians were keen-witted and brilliant, but lacked energy and firmness. Among such a people, individuality if thwarted was apt to pass over into rebellion against the state.

Plato, as a good Athenian, was fully conscious of his city's failings, and his sketch of the perfect state may be viewed as an object-lesson in practical politics to his fellow-citizens. The remedy he suggests for the strengthening of Athens is the introduction of

Spartan measures. In the Republic, then, Plato attempts to combine in one state the Athenian culture and the Spartan discipline, supplementing the one by the other so as to avoid the enervating influence of refinement, and the mental sluggishness produced by physical training. For this reason, the early education of the guardians is carried out by the two different disciplines of Music and Gymnastic. Music trains the soul, gymnastic the body. Or rather, as Plato points out, both influence the soul, though in different ways, and the result is the harmony of the spirited and philosophic temperaments. "Those who have devoted themselves to gymnastic exclusively become ruder than they ought to be: while those who have devoted themselves to music are made softer than is good for them." The truly "musical" man, the man developed by music and gymnastic, is at once cultured and manly.

### Section 3.-Music.

For Plato, education does not mean systematic instruction in routine courses. It is

true that he mentions 1 Arithmetic, Geometry, and the other subjects which are preliminary to the training in Philosophy, as subjects to be taught in childhood. But that is an afterthought, and qualified by the statement that the children are not to be compelled to learn, since "no study pursued under compulsion remains rooted in the memory." In Plato's opinion, direct training under compulsion (instruction as imparted in the modern school) has an evil influence on the mind. The only facts and ideas which can educate (that is, draw out, the mind) are those which it willingly receives and assimilates. All others are foreign to it; they do it harm in the learning, and are soon forgotten.

How then is education possible? The answer is to be found in Plato's conception of the soul. The soul's growth is determined by its environment. The state in which a man lives, the men whom he meets in daily life, the thoughts that come to him from poetry, all go to the making of the man. Under the stimulus from the world without, all that lies hidden within the soul may be called forth.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> VII., 536.

True education, therefore, does not consist in forcing knowledge into the soul, but in bringing it out; and the task of the educator is to find objects which embody those ideas that call forth the true character of the soul. For the first education, these objects are summed up for Plato in the word Music.

But "music" is not to be taken in the modern sense of the word. Perhaps "art" expresses most nearly what Plato meant, though even that is too narrow a word. The music which is to afford its first education to the soul consists of myths and legends about the gods and heroes, all kinds of poetry, the songs of the people, painting and sculpture, and the other arts. Music, in fact, means all the creations of man that appeal to the imagination. The purpose of all education 1 is to bring the soul to the knowledge of the good and true; but just because such knowledge only comes with developed reason when the soul reaches maturity, education cannot begin with it. The good and the true must be first grasped under the form of the beautiful: imagination must come before reason. Hence

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> III., 401, 402.

music (to use one of Plato's metaphors) is the fitting nutriment of childhood and youth.

The education of the child begins 1 with the stories about gods and heroes that it learns at its nurse's knee. As stories, doubtless they are false. But that does not matter so long as they convey to the child worthy ideas about gods and men. That they must do, or they cannot be allowed in the ideal state: for the mind is at a tender stage when every impression is readily taken on. From this point of view Plato condemns strongly the common Greek mythology, as it appears in Homer and the other poets. The ugly stories about the quarrels and intrigues and lies of the gods are such as should be kept from the hearing "of all, from childhood upwards, who are hereafter to honour the gods and their parents, and to set no small value on mutual friendship."

The education of children is thus largely religious in its character: right ideas about human duty are taught by holding up the actions of the gods for their imitation. The education of the young men,<sup>2</sup> to which Plato

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> II., 376-383.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> III., 386-392.

goes on, follows similar methods. To make them good citizens, brave, truthful, and self-controlled, the deeds of the great men of Greece, and of the godlike heroes, must afford them worthy models. They must not hear or read those accounts of the future world given by Homer, which represent it as a place from which even a good man might shrink. If death be made terrible, men will turn cowards and cease to fear slavery more than death. In like manner, all stories that encourage the youth to despise those in authority, or to be overcome by the passions, must be forbidden.

The next question which engages Plato in connection with the training of the young is the form that poetry is to take. At an earlier stage in education, the important thing is what is said; but with the growth of the soul, it also becomes important how it is said. What makes it important is the fact that men are naturally imitative: and some forms of poetry lead more to imitation than others. Should men be imitators? Plato asks. In raising the question, he is thinking as much of the hearer as of the reciter or actor. His conclusion is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> III., 392-398.

that imitation weakens character, and that the only imitation which can be permitted is the imitation of good men. From this point of view, he classifies poetry according to the degree in which it makes men imitators, and passes judgment on the educational value of the different forms: the lyric is sanctioned, the epic tolerated, and the drama forbidden.<sup>1</sup>

Coming next to songs and musical instruments,<sup>2</sup> he continues the work of "purgation." All songs that are plaintive or effeminate are to be banished from the state, and only the music that inspires the soul to temperance and valour retained. All complex musical instruments and rhythms are forbidden. Music, finally, must always be subordinate to the words expressed by its means.

Then in a few words Plato broadens out his conception of "music" till it covers not only the whole of art, but all the works of men's hands. Grace and harmony, he says, "enter largely into painting and all similar workmanship, into weaving and embroidery,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The significance of this judgment will be shown in section 7 when the censorship of Art is discussed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> III., 398-400.

<sup>8</sup> III., 401-403.

into architecture, as well as the whole manufacture of utensils in general." Accordingly, the state must exercise the same superintendence over the handicraftsmen as it does over the poets, and compel them to make the articles they produce, things of beauty. Thus will be created the City Beautiful, in which men, healthy in body and soul, will grow into harmony with the true beauty of reason.

## Section 4.—Gymnastic. 1

We have already seen why Plato considered that music taken by itself as a means of training was insufficient for the development of a well-balanced character. The man trained by music has culture and refinement, but is apt to lack firmness of character. Hence the need of the further training by Gymnastic.

Music exerts its influence on the soul from the beginning of life. The training in Gymnastic, on the other hand, does not begin till the last two or three years of youth, corresponding roughly to the time when the young Athenians got their first experience of military life in the home army. During this time the

<sup>1</sup> III., 403-412; VII., 537.

young men are to be kept hard at work in the warlike exercises of the wrestling school.

Gymnastic will, of course, make the young men strong and hardy, and that is important enough in its way. But its chief value is not in its effects on the body, but in its influence on the character. Music imparts grace to the soul, and makes it temperate. Gymnastic adds to temperance, spirit and courage, and the result is a harmonious character. The fact that the aim of gymnastic is the improvement of the soul leads Plato to remark that the young men must not be trained like mere athletes, but be moderate in eating and drinking, and even in exercise. He does not enter further into the character of the gymnastic training. If the mind has been first trained, he says, it may be charged "with the task of prescribing details with reference to the body."

### Section 5 .- The Soul in its Relation to its Environment.

It is not possible at the present point to enter fully into the discussion of Plato's theory of education. At a later stage in the argument it will be seen that this early training is only a preparation for a higher form, and the view of the soul on which both are based will be more clearly indicated. At the same time, it may serve to emphasise the more important features of the first education, if we consider its significance in a general way, even at the expense of some repetition.

In the first place, then, it is an education, not by direct teaching, but by environment. For the first twenty years of life the young men and women of the guardian class are allowed to follow their own devices. But all the while, without their knowledge of it, their souls are growing into goodness and intelligence under the stimulus of beautiful things. They hear the old-time stories about gods and heroes, they join in singing their country's songs, they listen to the inspiring verses of the poets. Everything around them is beautiful-pictures, and statues, and fine buildings, even the utensils in everyday use. "Then will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the good in everything: and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear, like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from

earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason."—(Jowett.)

Reserving for the next section the discussion of the place of beautiful things in the training of the soul, we may ask at this point how in general Plato conceives the relation between the soul and its environment. Perhaps the best answer is provided by a consideration of the metaphors he employs in describing the course of the first education. There are two which are worthy of notice. The first of these has reference to the influence of mythology in the days of childhood.1 "The selected fables we shall advise our nurses and mothers to repeat to their children, that they may thus mould their minds with the fables even more than they shape their bodies with the hand." This might seem to suggest that the soul is a plastic material, on which the world makes an impress. It is to be noted, however, that the metaphor has only reference to the youngest minds, which are those in which the living response of the soul to external influence is slightest. The metaphor which describes education at this stage most adequately is that

¹ II., 377.

of education being a nurture, and music and gymnastic being the nutriment of the soul.1 By this comparison, justice is done to the organic character of the soul. The external world which influences it does not merely force itself in upon it, and develop it by a process of mechanical additions. Without its stimulus, indeed, no development would take place, but the assimilating activity of the soul is no less necessary to convert the external into the form of the soul. The comparison is worked out more fully in the later books. There the idea of education as nurture gets expanded into the comparison of the soul with a plant; and education is spoken of as a conversion or turning of the soul. Thus, as will appear later, we get the view that education implies even more than the plant metaphor suggests: the final result of education under the stimulus from without, is the revelation of all that was in the soul from the beginning.

Thus in insisting on the importance of a suitable environment for the soul, Plato does not overlook the fact that for the formation of

<sup>1</sup> III., 401.

character there is needed in addition to good surroundings a certain reaction on the part of the growing mind. This much is implied in the selection of a limited number for training. But the point on which it is more important to insist, from the point of view of the educator, is that without appropriate conditions of life, even the best men will remain stunted and undeveloped. A man's character depends on his interests, and if by reason of bad environment a man is deprived of worthy interests, he can never grow into a noble, well-developed man. This has special application to the case of youth. The immature mind is of necessity receptive rather than creative or critical, and its chance of coming to maturity depends on its proper education. In this education, its environment is the main factor.

## Section 6.—Art as a Means of Education.

No philosopher or thinker on education has attached more importance to the influence of Art on character than Plato. To appreciate his estimate, it must be kept in mind that he was writing for a highly excitable

people, among whom poetry, music, and art had a more direct relation to life than in the modern world. Up to the time of the Sophists, the poets had been the leaders of ethical thought in Greece, and even in Plato's day a quotation from Homer was received with reverence and regarded as having authority, much like a quotation from the Bible at the present time. Since, then, Plato found art and literature bound up intimately with the social life of Greece, it was by no means an absurd proposal to adapt them to a system of education.

Further, Plato took a more serious view of art than most moderns. Like Hegel, he found in the creations of the artist a revelation of the spiritual meaning of the world and of human life, on a lower level than philosophic thought, but akin to it and leading up to it. For this reason, it is not to be separated in thought from science and philosophy, which in Plato's scheme of education are to be the studies of the more developed citizens. The distinction between the earlier and later educations lies in the fact that the principles which the soul comes to possess in clear consciousness of their meaning through philo-

sophy, are first apprehended in a particular form by means of art. All objects have a universal meaning or idea, but in most of them this idea is obscure. Beautiful things being, as Plato thinks, most like the ideal types, have a special power of suggesting them to the soul.1 For this reason, art plays a large part in the first education. In this connection it is to be noted that while all the arts and crafts help to form a beautiful environment for the soul, Plato attaches the greatest importance to mythology, poetry, and the music that accompanies words. These, as contrasted with the others, use language as the material to which they give beautiful form. It is this that gives them their value for education; for though in the language of the poet or the singer, the distinction between the beautiful and the true is never quite broken down, it is continually on the point of breaking down. Hence even more than the work of the painter or the sculptor, myth and poetry and song

As we shall see when the relation of the soul to its ideas is discussed, beautiful things may be said to draw out the ideas from the soul: the ideas are there from the beginning, but, so to speak, latent.

lead men by the path of imagination towards goodness and reason.

All this may be put in another way. Education, Plato suggests, begins with what is false. Nothing is true but the whole truth, and the young mind being limited to particular experiences which it can hardly be said to understand, does not possess that. If ever it is to come to the truth, it must be by beginning with something less. The beautiful, which half reveals and half conceals the truth, supplies this preparation. And however inadequate the form in which art conveys truth, the man who learns to appreciate the beautiful is preparing himself for the development of mind which will enable him to reach the truth in its proper form. Just as a religious mythology may teach what is true in the false form of legend and myth, so art may give the undeveloped soul as much truth as it is fit to receive.

The relation of art to conduct may be illustrated by a consideration of one of Plato's strange statements. The guardians, he says, must allow no innovations in the songs of the people, lest the change bring about

the ruin of the state. On first thoughts, it is a startling theory that revolutions may come by song-singing. But Plato has in his mind the little city state where every movement, however petty in its beginnings, might have serious consequences; and, at the same time, he sees in the songs that a nation sings an expression of its character. "What do you say of the style and the words?" he asks,1 in regard to poetry. "Are they not determined by the moral disposition of the soul?" And what is true of poetry holds good also in reference to songs and every product of art. They show what manner of man the artist is; and, more important from the point of view of the state, they appeal to, and it may be, create character in the man who appreciates them. The songs of a nation cannot, therefore, be regarded as indifferent to its moral life. Even in the modern states, whose complexity and greatness of extent makes such influences less appreciable, songs like the "Marseillaise" have played no inconsiderable part in times of national crisis. Much more, then, would be the power of song over the excitable Greek in

his little city state. So long as the feelings and aspirations of a people are unexpressed, they are comparatively impotent. Even when put into words that speak to the reason, they may lack power to move the multitude. But a great song that voices a national feeling exerts an untold influence. Here again is the paradox of art. A song in which there is no direct expression of thoughts has a persuasive force which the mind, if true to itself, can only allow to principles founded on reason. The secret of its power is that, though not rational in the highest sense, it is based on sentiments which can be expressed in rational form, and which must be so expressed if they are to retain their influence.

## Section 7.—The Censorship of Art.

The censorship which Plato proposes to exercise on Art in the interests of education, throws some interesting sidelights on his view of the state. The right of the state to regulate art, asserted by him, involves no novel principle. All states, in the ancient and the modern world alike, have claimed and exercised the right to a greater or less degree;

in our own country, for example, all plays produced on the stage have first to be sanctioned by a censor. And it may be suggested that though from the modern point of view Plato's scheme seems to involve an excessive interference with the individual, it probably did not strike his contemporaries in that way, or at least, not to the same extent that it strikes us. Nevertheless, his view is open to criticism on other grounds.

In the first place, it is based on a very narrow view of art. In all the restrictions imposed on spontaneously produced art, he thinks of the arts as a means of education. and indeed the sole means of education for the majority of his citizens. But the question may be raised whether this is fair either to the artist who produces, or to the people for whom he produces. What is harmful to a young or immature mind is not necessarily bad; and its exclusion from the state may impoverish the lives of some of the citizens. Plato's answer to this objection would probably be similar to that which he gives when it is suggested that the life of the guardians would not be happy that the well-being of the whole community is to be placed before the happiness of any class. And the principle, as a principle, admits of no discussion. The state as a whole must have first consideration from the legislator. We are thus forced back to an examination of the considerations by which he has been guided in discriminating between good and bad art.

Here we may distinguish two cases, according as his criticism concerns the substance or the form.1 In the first case, no exception can be taken from the point of view of education. If the myths and stories of the poets contain false ideas and bad morals, calculated to mislead the youth, the duty of the educator is to prevent them from being harmed by them. Whether it be true or not that men in general are imitators, the statement is true in the case of children and youths. Their first attitude towards the social world in which their lot is cast is one of unreflecting imitation; and in the nature of the case, it cannot be otherwise. It is, accordingly, all-important that at this susceptible stage they should be shielded

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> That the distinction is not hard and fast appears from the way in which bad form expresses itself in bad substance. Note, for example, the case of the drama, discussed below.

from evil influences of every kind. If objection is to be taken to Plato, it must be because he does not restrict his protection to the period of youth. Character is not developed in the absence of temptation to evil. A time comes, or should come, in the life of every man when he is no longer an uncritical imitator, and then it is better that he should be left to face for himself the moral problems that the evils of society force on him.

What has been said about the substance of art applies equally to its form. If, for example, certain forms of music tend to make men cowardly, the educator is justified in forbidding them to his charges. It is true that in this case it is more difficult to define the effects on character; but this difficulty is one for the practical politician and does not really affect the principle. Plato, however, has laid down the grounds on which certain forms of art are to be permitted and others forbidden in the ideal state. Hence it is necessary to examine the criterion he applies. We may take as a very simple case the musical instruments which he permits to be used in "We shall not maintain the the state.

makers of harps or dulcimers, or any instrument that has many strings or serves for many modes." What is his objection? Surely not that there is any close connection between many-stringed instruments and immorality. And yet Plato does see a connection between the many-stringed instrument and the character of the people. For the many strings represent a dissatisfaction with the simpler instruments, which is but one example of the general unrest which threatened to demoralise the citizens of Athens.

His criterion of good art, that is, of art considered good from the educational point of view, is simplicity. Good art is simple. Perhaps the most interesting application of this principle is in his discussion of the different kinds of poetry. The lyric containing simple narrative is the only form of poetry which meets with unqualified approval; and the reason is that it deals with single emotional phases, and is essentially simple. When it is considered that the lyric is the most sensuous and least rational form of poetry, the result appears a strange one. On this view the poetry furthest removed from reason is the best means to lead the soul

to reason. The drama, on the other hand, stands condemned by its complexity. It represents all kinds of characters and situations, and does not always make plain which course of action is right, and which wrong. The result is that the onlookers, who, Plato says, are naturally imitative, are left in a state of moral bewilderment. We may consider in this aspect a drama like the Antigone, in which the tragedy develops out of the opposing claims of family and state. The family and the state have their own spheres within which they may claim the devotion of the individual; and so long as the two spheres do not conflict, life goes smoothly. But with conflict comes tragedy, and what is a duty in one case may become a crime in a different context. Now, since men naturally imitate the characters they see represented, the conflict of duties in the play is reproduced in their minds, and the result is an unsettling of their ideas of right and wrong.

The explanation of Plato's desire for a simpler art is to be found in the condition of Greece at this time. The traditional morality had passed away, and men's minds were in a state of confusion with regard to moral questions. The

trouble was really due to the greater complexity of life which the progress of society entailed. When men first grew conscious of this complexity, there was a tendency, which was most prominent in the teaching of the Sophists, to deny that there were any fixed moral principles. Add to this the fact that the vigorous intellectual life of the times fostered a restless versatility which unfitted men for the common duties of the citizen, and it is possible to understand why Plato should associate the prevailing confusion with the complexity, and wish to get the people to return to the primitive simplicity of the good old days, when there had been no difficulty in distinguishing right from wrong. What he failed to see was that it was not the teaching of any school or the introduction of new customs which had led to this chaos, but the complexity of life itself; and that the only real escape was not to resurrect the simplicity of the past, but to discover principles which would restore unity to the tangle of life. What was wanted was not the simplicity that only a young nation knows, but that deeper simplicity which results from the unifying of the complex relations of an advanced society by further experience and thought.

## CHAPTER V

#### COMMUNISM

# Section 1.—The Guardians under a Communistic System. 1

THE ideal city, as described in the earlier sections of the Republic, does not differ in any fundamental character from the Greek states of Plato's day. In no city, perhaps, were there exactly the same three orders of citizens; and nowhere were the youth so systematically educated in music and gymnastic. Yet in most points his proposals for the new state had been suggested by the actual practice of some city. This may be said to be the first stage in the construction of the state: the result is an improved Greek city. But in the second stage, to which we now come, a more revolutionary change is proposed: the guardians must be deprived of all personal interests, and live under a strict communistic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> III., 415—IV., 427; V., 449-471.

system. Plato believes that private property of one kind or another is the root of all evil in the state. Wherever it exists in a state, it sets class against class. The rulers use their powers to prey on their fellow-citizens, with the result that in a city of this kind there are really two cities, "hostile one to the other, the city of the poor, and the city of the rich." It is also the constant cause of quarrels among the members of the ruling class, and Plato anticipates that under a regime of common property, the guardians will be delivered "from all those quarrels which are occasioned among men by the separate possession of money and children and kindred." To avoid the evils that private property causes, Plato takes away from the guardians every personal possession. "That city is best conducted in which the largest proportion of citizens apply the words 'mine' and 'not mine' similarly to the same objects." It is only in this kind of state, he thinks, that there can be recognised a unity like that of the human body, such that the pleasure or pain of one member affects all with a like feeling.

But how is this scheme to be carried out?

In regard to ordinary possessions, Plato finds the case simple enough. So far as possible, no one is to possess any private property. A camp is to be formed in which the guardians are to live under military discipline. They are to possess no lands, no houses, and no money.1 Whatever necessaries they require, they are to receive from their fellow-citizens "as wages for their services." (The question of marriage and the family presents greater difficulty, but even here Plato rigorously insists that private interests must disappear. In one passage 2 he expresses the opinion that the abolition of private property would be of little effect, if private domestic life remained. For the many families that exist under the ordinary conditions of social life he would substitute one great family. He is thus compelled to undertake a drastic rearrangement of the relations of the sexes. In the first place, he would have men and women engage in the same occupations. Each sex has its own part to play in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In this he was following the precedent of those Greek states in which land was held in common; and, in particular, of Sparta, which had common land, common meals, and common slaves.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> V., 464.

propagation of the race; but apart from that, there is no reason why women should not share with men the work of the state. Accordingly, the superior women must be set apart to act as guardians in the same way as the men, and after being trained for guardian duties by the same education, must join them in the common life of the camp. They must even take part in war. In regard to marriage, strict regulations are made. At fixed seasons temporary marriage alliances are to be formed under religious auspices. The children born of these marriages are to be separated from their mothers as soon as they are born, and committed to the care of the state, precautions being taken that parents will not know their own children afterwards.)

### Section 2.—Plato's Communism in relation to Greek Life.

In the Republic there is set forth for the first time the Socialistic conception of the state; and strangely enough, it was the passing away of the primitive Socialism of Greece which called it into being. Like all the Aryan nations, the Greek states began their history with what may be called

"Socialistic" methods of government. Their laws and their customs gave the state practically unlimited powers over the citizen, and he as yet had not come to think of himself as having rights in his individual capacity.<sup>1</sup>

So long as these conditions prevailed, there was no need to assert the supremacy of the state. The individual was already absorbed in the state, and the need was rather for loosening the bonds and allowing a greater liberty. But with the period of the Greek Enlightenment, of which the Sophists were the most characteristic representatives, there came a change. The increasing intercourse of nations and the spread of culture resulted in a weakening of the civic morality, and there appeared a strong individualistic trend of thought, which led ultimately to the individual asserting himself against the state. This rebellion assumed two forms, represented

¹ The fact that the individual had not yet asserted himself as a subject of rights distinguishes the primitive Socialism from that of Plato and of modern times. As a Socialistic ideal of the state implies such an assertion of individuality on the part of the citizen, the use of the word "socialistic" to characterise the early Greek states must be made with considerable qualification. On the difference between Platonic and modern Socialism, see Section 3.

respectively by the Sophists and by Socrates. On the part of the Sophists and those who came under their influence, the reaction from state control commonly took the form of a protest, more or less capricious, against all established institutions and laws. In the case of Socrates, the movement of Individualism took nobler form in the appeal from law and from custom to moral principles.

In both forms, however, it was a menace to the authority of the state; and Plato, living in the midst of the disorder occasioned by the unwillingness to submit to restraint, feared that the state might be overturned. In his anxiety for the maintenance of the state's authority, he did not see that, in some of its forms, this revolt was the assertion of a just claim on the part of the individual, to have his rights as an individual recognised. Hence his problem in the Republic came to be this: how are the several citizens, who as self-assertive individuals are centres of disturbance, to be fitted into their proper places in the state? And the substance of his answer is that they must be educated into good citizenship, deprived of property and

family, and compelled to do the work which has been assigned to them.

Thus Plato's policy is to curb the individual by taking from him all interests, save those which he finds in his duties as a citizen.) The explanation of this reactionary position is to be found in the fact that his political outlook was limited to the city states of Greece. Under the influence of Socrates, he recognised that the philosopher, in the life of thought, rises into a sphere which includes, yet goes beyond, that of patriotism; 1 but he did not see the bearings of this on practical philosophy—that it indicated possibilities in human nature which the civic life of Greece did not satisfy. Unable to anticipate the course of the future, he seemed to think like Aristotle, that no state larger and more complex than the Greek municipalities could ever arise. Hence he failed to conceive the possibility of a state in which a greater liberty of the subject would not be inconsistent with the state's supremacy. He was certainly right in the main, so far as the Greek states were concerned; the very existence of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This is implied in the fact that he sets the philosopher above law, as king of the ideal state.

by any considerable extension of liberty. It was only by the slow development of a complex organisation, to which the ancient world had no parallel, that the freedom of the individual which is characteristic of the modern nation states became possible.

#### Section 3.—Individual and State.

The comparisons with the modern world which are suggested by applying the word "Socialism" to Plato's view of the state are entirely misleading, unless the difference between Plato's system and all systems of modern Socialism is kept in mind. This difference is fundamental; it is a difference in purpose, and therefore in point of view. The modern Socialist wishes greater state control in the interests of the individual. Plato's Socialism is in the interests of the state. This is at once the strength and the weakness of his position. For while it leads him to insist rightly enough that good citizenship is the basis of any true individuality, it is the cause of his failure to see that a truly organic view of the state implies that the

citizen has interests outside his public duties as a citizen. We proceed to consider his conception of the relation of state and individual in the two aspects thus suggested.

In the first place, Plato rightly emphasises the dependence of the individual on the state v as a condition of his individuality. This is well brought out in the noteworthy passage at the beginning of the Fourth Book.1 Adeimantus takes objection to the sacrifices exacted from the guardians, and urges that they will not be happy. To this Plato makes Socrates answer that though he would not be surprised if the guardians were happy even under the hard conditions of their life, the aim of the state is not to make one class preeminently happy, but to ensure the greatest possible happiness for the state as a whole. In this way of viewing the social life, Plato does not differ in any essential point from the modern world. We would perhaps be less ready to sacrifice the happiness of one class to the good of the other classes; but we recognise the same principle that the well-being of the people in general is to be put before the

<sup>1</sup> IV., 420, 421.

interests of any section. So too, though we do not put direct compulsion on a man to make him do his proper work, we agree with Plato that there is no real happiness for him except in doing that work. We do not think, any more than Plato does, that a man's individuality consists in his having pursuits and interests exclusively his own, or that sharing in the common social life diminishes individuality.

But while Plato is right in making citizenship the basis of individuality, his desire to assert the state's authority led him to overestimate the importance of civic duties. Since it seemed to him that the weakening of patriotism was due to the diversion of the citizens from their public work by other pursuits, he came to the false conclusion that these personal concerns were incompatible with with the well-being of the state. The result was an inadequate view both of the state and of the individual, which shows itself in the attempt to secure unanimity in the state by excluding as much as possible every personal sentiment and interest. With this end in view, he enacts that the guardians must not hold land or money or any form of property as

private possessions. These things in private ownership make men less faithful citizens. They divide the city into the two opposing factions of rich and poor; they make men more concerned about their own profit than about the welfare of the state; and they are the cause of endless quarrels. And he insists still more on the abolition of the family. The family is a kind of state within the state which may at any time involve its members in conflict with it, by the claims it makes on them.1 destroying the private home-life of guardians and placing them in a camp where they share everything with their fellows, he hopes to secure from them undistracted devotion to the state and to the duties which it requires of them.)

The criticisms passed on Plato's communistic proposals by his great pupil, Aristotle 2—himself no unqualified advocate of the rights of private

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In the small Greek states, a quarrel between a powerful individual and the government might easily lead to a rebellion, if the man's kinsmen stood by him. Another example of the evils occasioned by the existence of the family is provided by the strife of dynasties. *Cf.* also VIII., 549, where Plato refers to the evil influence of women on the characters of men as citizens.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Politics, II. 2-5.

property—are substantially just. In his opinion those evils which Plato supposed to spring from individual ownership are really due to the weakness of human nature. For his part, he looks for the cure, not in regulations made in disregard of past experience, but in a wise education aided by such changes in existing laws and customs as would make men willing to place their private possessions at the service of their fellows. He points out as a lesson of history that quarrels take place even more readily about goods held in common about those in private hands; and he fears that if private property be abolished, there will be lost that pleasure in what is one's own, "a feeling implanted by nature," which is so strong an incentive to the best work. In the absence of personal property, further, there will be no opportunity for the exercise of generosity and unselfishness, the virtues of comradeship. But it is not only the citizens that would be affected. The state also would suffer. A state in which there is no longer any difference in property among the citizens has become too simple; it is "an inferior state": it is like "harmony reduced to unison."

The sum of Aristotle's criticism of Plato's state, then, is that with all things in common the citizens are worse men and the state a worse state. It may help to bring out the defects of Plato's ideal if we follow out the two lines of criticism suggested by Aristotle. In the first place, it is going little beyond Aristotle to say that without private possessions the citizen cannot become a virtuous man, or that if virtuous, he would have but scanty opportunity to exercise his virtues. It is true that there still remain for him his duties as a citizen; but in the service of the state, where every man has his work prescribed, there is no call for any virtues save faithfulness and obedience, the virtues of the slave and the child. If the citizen is to be a moral agent in any true sense, he must be allowed to work out his own salvation; and for that, he ought to have things he can call his own. For it is in making things "his," and in the use of these possessions, that character is formed. The child and the slave have provision made for their needs from day to day, and do not require to think what the morrow will bring forth. Hence, for neither of them is there any unity in life;

or rather the unity that there is, comes from without, imposed by the will and intelligence of others. What the man is more than the child, is due to what he possesses. By owner-V ship he becomes a "person," compelled to plan out his life and to unite it into an organic whole in which present and future are influenced by the past. Further, though it might seem that the man were shut up within himself by the exclusiveness of private possession, it is not really so. Both in getting and enjoying what he calls "his own," he must enter into relations with his fellows as worker and as neighbour. Thus property puts the individual into organic relation with society and gives him at once his duties and his station in life. It does not follow, however, that he will be a good citizen. Interest in his own affairs may lead him to put his own wellbeing before that of the state. That selfinterest does not always make for the common good is an undoubted fact, and therein consists the danger to the state which Plato fears. the abolition of private interests is altogether too drastic a remedy. What the case demands is not the abolition, but the regulation, of

property. It is clearly better that there should be personal possessions and liberties, even at the risk of their misuse; for, as Aristotle suggests, men may then be taught to use what is theirs for the good of all. In the second place-by way of corollary to the first point—the state in which the citizens have no private life has no power to keep its members together. The unity of social life is not, and cannot be, as simple as Plato would make it.1 Without some community of interests among the citizens, no state could exist; yet it is not so much what is common as what is different in them that binds them into the living unity of the social whole. For by the diversity of their pursuits and dispositions they supplement one another, and find in the state the sphere within which they can

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle calls Plato's state an *inferior* state: its excessive unity is in his opinion its condemnation. What he says about the unity of the state is most easily grasped by thinking of the state as an organism. Now it is not the highest, but the lowest, forms of life that are most simple. The higher an animal or a plant is in the scale of life the more complex it is: the organs by which it discharges the various functions of life become more differentiated, to be the better able to do their work. But with this complexity there goes an improvement in the organism as a whole. That is to say, its unity has been made not less, but more effective by the differences.

live out their own lives. And that state is best in which the deepest differences are found compatible with loyalty to the commonweal.

#### CHAPTER VI

#### THE PHILOSOPHER AS KING

#### Section 1.—Can the Ideal State be Realised? 1

THE discussion about the nature of Justice with which the Republic begins, leads in the first four books to the construction of the ideal state; and not only is the true character of Justice shown, but a more or less complete answer is given to the question whether justice or injustice is the more profitable." But the outline of the state which Socrates gives so interests his hearers, not excluding Thrasymachus, that as the discussion seems to be drawing to a close, they begin to ply him with further questions. They want to know more about the community of wives and children, and about his proposal to put men and women to the same tasks. Above all, they would have him discuss the question whether his state is practicable.

Socrates treats the questions about the details of the communistic state—"waves of difficulty," he terms them-one by one; and then he come to the last and the greatest of the waves, the possibility of the ideal state being realised. First of all, he safeguards himself: he will not admit that his state would be any the worse, even if it were not practicable. Men do not think any less of the artist who has painted a man of perfect beauty, because no such man exists or could exist. Even if the ideal state were never established, it would still be a divine pattern, eternal in the heavens, and statesmen by aspiring towards it would make themselves and their states better. He is even ready to admit that in a sense this must be the case. The real always. falls short of the ideal: it is always easier to talk about a thing than to bring it into being. At the same time, he does not think it altogether impossible to get the state realised. Provided that one condition be fulfilled, actual states may approximate to it. In a halfhumorous way, knowing that it will sound ridiculous, he tells them what the condition is: philosophers must be kings.

#### Section 2.—Philosophers must be Kings.

The assertion that philosophical insight and political power must be united in one person seems to suggest "either that such men as Newton, Locke, Bentham, and Mill should be Cabinet Ministers, or that Cabinet Ministers should be obliged to read books about evolution or metaphysics"; and this is certainly not what Plato means. The misunderstanding is due to the narrow sense in which we use the word "philosopher." In common speech, a philosopher means one who devotes himself to abstract thought, one who stands aside from the life of the world, content with the world within. Such a man we regard as ignorant of the world and useless in its affairs. But this is not the man to whom Plato would commit the business of state. The abstract thinker is a one-sided man, who has gained his insight into the principles of life by taking no active part in it. Plato's "philosopher," on the contrary, is the true lover of wisdom, who enters into the special duties of life, yet keeps such a grasp upon life as a whole that he gives everything its right place. His is the clear knowledge of principle and conviction, which unites theory and practice in an activity useful in the highest degree to his fellows.

Plato is well aware that this is not how people look upon philosophers. So he makes one of the speakers assert that whatever philosophers are in theory, in actual life they are often rogues, and in any case, of little use in the world. Strange to say, Plato does not deny the fact; but he explains it. He asserts that real philosophers are few, and that many of those who call themselves philosophers are not really so, but have been led to pose as lovers of truth, for the sake of the reputation it brings. These are the men who have brought discredit on philosophy. More than that: the few who have the philosophic insight are not always faithful to the light that is in them. Noble natures are easily corrupted, and some of these men have been spoiled by flattery, while others have allowed themselves to be turned aside from the truth. people blame the Sophists for corrupting them; but Plato does not agree with this.

<sup>1</sup> VI., 487-497.

After all, the Sophists do not count for nearly so much as the seductive influence of public opinion, the greatest of all the Sophists. The young man either drifts unconsciously into agreement with the traditions and conventions of the people around him, or if he struggles against the established order of things, his protest is overborne by petty persecution. The few who escape the snares, and refuse to conform unthinkingly to the existing ideas and practices, are the true philosophers; for it is only by such a revolt against tradition that the thinker can work his way to an insight into the principles which underlie the tradition. These are the men whom Plato would force to leave the life of speculation, in which, if it were a matter for themselves only, they would rather continue. With them at the head of affairs, applying to the business of the state the best ideas about life, the ideal state would be realised. Unfortunately, such men can be of little use in any existing state, because no state wants them.

## Section 3.—Science and Opinion.1

In speaking of the wisdom which fits the true philosophers to be rulers, Plato puts forward an important view of knowledge. The philosopher he defines to be a man with a love of every form of wisdom for its own sake. The proof of this pure love of wisdom is given by the fact that he has an illimitable desire for new learning of all kinds. This, however, does not mark off the philosopher sufficiently, since there are many with this comprehensive interest who are unworthy of the name of philosophers. There are, for example, the people who love sight-seeing, and pass their lives in seeking new scenes, and those also who take a cultured interest in art: even intelligent workmen are not excluded by the definition. What more, then, is needed to distinguish such people from the philosopher? Plato answers the question by making a distinction between Science and Opinion. The ordinary man, eager to see and hear, is constantly on the outlook for something new, but the knowledge he acquires in this way is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> V., 474-480.

unsatisfactory. He does not select his facts or understand them. He is too much interested in them as facts to try to get at the principles which would explain them and bind them into the unity of a system. In contrast with the systematic knowledge, or Science, of the philosopher, his knowledge of any fact is only an Opinion (or Seeming).

The nature of Opinion is thus exemplified by Plato: "The lovers of sounds and sights are, as I conceive, fond of fine tones and colours and forms, and all the artistic products made out of them, but their minds are incapable of seeing or loving beauty itself." In this passage, Opinion about beautiful things is contrasted with true knowledge of them. The man who appreciates without knowing why has only Opinion: Science implies a knowledge of what beauty is, or, in the words of Plato, of the "Idea" of beauty. As a matter of fact, opinions are the mental stock-in-trade of most men in every-day affairs. They pass judgment on actions in such terms as "good" and "bad"; but if they are pressed to say what they really mean by "goodness" or "badness," and why they judge particular actions "good"

or "bad," they can give no satisfactory answer. So, again, in asserting that "This house is small" or "That stone is heavy," we have only Opinion so far as these are isolated facts; and the statements can only be brought within the scope of Science by understanding what is implied in the words "small" and "heavy," and knowing under what conditions they are applicable in the particular cases. In short, we have an opinion whenever a universal term such as "beautiful," "just," "heavy," or the like is predicated of some particular thing without itself having been made an object of thought. Opinion, then, is the vague knowledge that can give no reason for itself. Its defect, as Plato indicates, is that it is unreliable. When a man uses universal terms without reflecting upon them, he finds them continually shifting their meaning. He calls a thing "heavy," for example, when he compares it with one set of things, and "light" when he compares it with another. An object that is beautiful when he is in a certain mood, ceases to be beautiful with a change of mood; and for another man it may not be beautiful under any circumstances. In the same way, every judgment

in which a general term is predicated of a particular object—the statement, for example, that the sky is blue, or that a particular act of theft is mean—is at best only relatively true: it is true under certain conditions, false under others. Thus the general term which is connected with the object is more or less accidental to it: if there is a necessary connection, the "opinion" or particular judgment does not bring it out.

But though the particular judgment, as it stands, can only give a vague knowledge, it has implicit in it the sure knowledge of Science. Let us take the statement: "This scene is beautiful." As a single statement of fact, the judgment is only relative, and cannot be regarded as giving us real knowledge. But even in making the statement we have got beyond particularity by the use of the general term "beautiful." The statement made comes to be: "This scene is one of the kind of things we call beautiful." That is, in making the judgment we had in our minds the conception or idea of the beautiful which is not limited to this or any particular case. It is this that Plato suggests when he says

that the beautiful (or beauty) is "one"; 1 it has a fixed meaning, independent of the context in which it is applied. "The same thing may be said likewise," he goes on, "about justice and injustice, good and evil, and all the ideas. Each of them is itself one. but by sharing in actions and bodies and in one another, they are seen in all sorts of aspects, and appear many." The ideas (which are expressed in the general terms predicated of some object or other) only appear to have many different meanings, because of their relation to particular facts. If we are to get true knowledge, we must think of them apart from the world of particulars in which they are inadequately revealed, and find out exactly what they mean.

The opposition between Opinion and Science thus resolves itself into a difference in the way that we know: Opinion being the knowledge of particular facts and events, Science, the knowledge of the universals or ideas that explain these particulars. We may consider as a simple illustration the judgment: "This stone is heavy." Whether the statement is to

rank as Opinion or Science, depends on the man who makes it. If he is ignorant of physical science, and unable to define to himself the idea of "heaviness," he may be saying what is quite true, but the judgment has no validity for anyone else but himself. Should anyone deny his assertion, he is helpless to meet the denial. The statement in this case, whether true or false, is unworthy to be called real knowledge; it can only be called opinion. The scientist, on the other hand, adds to his statement, implicitly or explicitly, his reason for it. "This stone is heavy, because all bodies on the surface of the earth are attracted toward the centre." 1 The fact is no longer an uncertain opinion; it has become science, because, in the words used by Plato in the Meno, it has been made sure "by a knowledge of the cause." By the discovery of the cause of the phenomenon, the idea or principle manifesting itself in the phenomenon receives definition. The particular case no longer

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of simplicity, I do not make any attempt to work out the idea of heaviness. The reason given would, of course, be no answer to one who denied that a particular stone was heavy.

stands by itself, but appears as an expression of a comprehensive law; and once its right to be so regarded is admitted, it has all the certainty that the law itself has. There are, indeed, varying degrees of certainty in knowledge. The fact that a stone has the character of heaviness, has a surer foundation in knowledge, when we think of it as exemplifying the law of earth-attraction, than it had as an isolated fact, since in this way it is brought into relation with a great variety of other facts. But we may, if we care, press further back, and seek a reason for the law itself. We find that the relation between the earth and bodies on its surface is but one case of the principle of gravitation, which is a principle applying to the whole material universe. The heaviness of the stone is thus brought into an even more comprehensive system of facts and ideas; and the idea of "heaviness" gets more adequate and precise definition. Another illustration of the difference between Opinion and Science may be useful. Among the natives in certain parts of Arabia, the "opinion" has long been held that malarial fever is caused by the bite of the mosquito. Compare this opinion with the "knowledge" of the scientific expert on the same subject. The expert brings to the study of the question the germ theory of disease. Thus the fact which for the native stands alone is connected for the scientist with innumerable facts about other diseases, and by its relation to this system of facts has a certainty and exactness which it can never have as an isolated opinion. The scientist not only knows the fact, but he knows its idea or law.

Knowledge, then, is concerned with the ideas or laws that unify for the mind the manifold of the phenomenal world. But it must not be thought that the activity of mind in the definition of ideas or laws takes the thinker away from the reality of the world. For Plato, as for the modern scientist, the world, ideally known, is the real world. This is implied in the distinction which he makes between the object-matter of Science and of Opinion. Science, he says, has for its province the knowledge of the existent, that which is; to ignorance corresponds the non-existent, that which is not. Accordingly,

since Opinion is midway between knowledge and ignorance, its objects lie between the existent and the non-existent. It appears at first sight as though Plato were crediting with a kind of reality that which is only a confusion of the mind, and we are tempted to say that there can be nothing half-real, half-unreal. What Plato means, however, is clear enough. The particulars, as they are known to the man who is at the stage of opinion and has not seen them in the light of their ideas, have a certain reality of their own. is true that they have not the reality he ascribes to them, since he thinks of them as having no essential relation to each other and to the world as a whole. But though he mistakes what is only appearance for the reality, there must still be some reality in the appearance; for it is out of the imperfections of Opinion that the scientific knowledge of reality arises. What Plato is trying to bring out, when he speaks of Opinion as occupied with those things which lie between the real and the unreal, is the contradiction inevitable at the beginning of all knowledge. The mind must start somewhere and take something as real. Even in its first crude struggles after knowledge it must have some grasp of reality—else it could never reach reality at all. It the same time, the fact that the mind develops implies that what was first taken as real is found not to be real as the mind took it. There is a deeper reality, which it only knows when it gets beyond its first view of things and events as mere particulars, and sees them as the embodiments of ideas or principles.

Plato's view of knowledge had its origin in the teaching of Socrates, that knowledge must consist of conceptions; but in Plato's hands the Socratic point of view underwent considerable modification. According to Socrates, the only man who has knowledge is the man who is able to define his conceptions: he would not have allowed that the man with opinions had any knowledge at all. The view that between ignorance and knowledge there is a mean state is an important advance on this. The Socratic alternative, ignorance or knowledge, makes any growth in knowledge inconceivable. From absolute ignorance, which Socrates asserted to be the condition

of those who do not understand the principles of action, there is no way into knowledge: out of nothing, nothing comes. Plato's view breaks down the sharp o position between ignorance and knowledge; and mediates between them by a state of mind which, if not yet knowledge, is on the way to it. Much in the same way Plato found it necessary to modify the teaching of Socrates on morality. For Socrates there was no goodness except that which proceeds from the clear understanding of what goodness means. Plato, again, is fundamentally in agreement with his master, but sees what he had failed to see, that there is a goodness of habit produced by training, which is necessary as a stage towards the true goodness based on principle. In this way he was led to view education, both intellectual and moral, as a process in which the mind's first opinion of things is replaced by a clear knowledge of principles, which all unknown to the mind, were present in it from the beginning.

#### CHAPTER VII

#### THE HIGHER EDUCATION

## Section 1.—The Course of Higher Education.1

THE state can only have philosophers as its rulers by providing a proper training in philosophy for its best citizens. The first education by means of Art and Gymnastic, never takes the soul out of the shadowland of Opinion. Accordingly, it must be supplemented by instruction which will draw men from the region of change and seeming into the realities of philosophy. Yet it is not all the guardians who are worthy of this higher education, but only those who during the course of the first education have shown themselves devoted to the state, stable in character, and acute in intellect. After the preliminary discipline in Art and Gymnastic for the first twenty years of their lives, these picked men are set to a systematic course in

of three for ten years. While this training is going on, they occupy subordinate posts in the public service. This period of scientific training serves a double purpose: it brings out the men who are able to see the principles that rule among particular things, and prepares them for Dialectic (or Philosophy); and it keeps them back from the study of Dialectic till they are grounded in good living, and no longer in danger of making shipwreck of their characters in that study. At thirty years of age, the best of the young guardians retire from active life, and spend five years in the study of Dialectic, coming through it to the highest of all knowledge, the Idea of the Good. At thirty-five, they return to the business of the state, especially in war, for fifteen years, during which time they gain by contact with men that experience which rulers need. Finally, at the age of fifty, those men who have still given a good account of themselves in the public service, become the supreme rulers of the state, and are allowed to divide their time between the study of the Good and the business of government.

## Section 2.—The Idea of the Good.

As a preface to the discussion of the higher education, Plato indicates the nature of that highest object of knowledge which the philosophical training gives, and by means of which the guardians are able to rule with wisdom. This is what Plato calls "the Idea of the Good." His meaning will be better followed by relating this Idea to the Socratic philosophy, with which it has an intimate connection. Socrates, it has been already pointed out, started his work as a moral teacher by forcing men to see their own ignorance. He saw that in all moral judgments certain undefined principles are presupposed. Hence he pressed men to define their meaning when they spoke of certain acts as just, or generous, or brave. What is meant by justice? The ordinary man answers by referring to certain just acts. Socrates goes deeper, and must know what it is that constitutes the justice of an act, implying in this way that there is a universal principle expressed in all particular actions. But just as all particular actions imply such universals as justice, bravery, and the like, so

beneath all the special universals of the moral life there is one great universal, which he calls the Good. Why should a man be brave or just? Because bravery and justice are good: and by being brave and just, men realise the good. That is to say, Socrates sees that all conduct has a common end which every man pursues, and he calls that end the Good. This is the germ of Plato's Idea of the Good.

It is in this Idea of the Good 1 which is the end of all human action that Plato finds the supreme knowledge. The recognition of an end or purpose in everything that a man does, makes the earlier analysis of morality in terms of the four cardinal virtues no longer adequate. Temperance, courage, wisdom, justice, are now seen to be different forms of goodness, and hence they cannot be properly known till the good be known. This means, in effect, that to know what justice or any of the other virtues is, we must see it in its relations to life as a whole.

But what is this Idea of the Good which makes life a whole? Some people say that it consists in knowledge or insight. But if it be

<sup>1</sup> VI., 504-506.

knowledge, knowledge of what? The answer that must be given is, "Knowledge of the Good"; and the answer takes us no further forward, since we have not been told what the good is. The truth is that the circle in thought is inevitable if the attempt be made to define the good apart from the whole of life, to which it has given its system. Others, again, identify pleasure with the good as the end of life. Plato's objection is that the distinction of good and evil pleasures implies that the end of action is not pleasure, since we ask about pleasure, as about all else in life, whether it is good."

Having disposed in this cursory way 1 of those who would regard either knowledge or pleasure as the one object of life, he tries to characterise the Good as it appears in the moral life of the individual man. It is that, he says, "which every soul pursues as the end of all its actions." 2 A man may be content to seem just without being so in reality. But it is different with the Good; even though they are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The two views are discussed at length in the Philebus.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cf. the opening sentence of Aristotle's Ethics: "The good is that at which everything aims."

in perplexity about its nature, all men want to get it, and not the mere appearance of it. Everything they do has as its ultimate motive the search for good, for their own good.

It is accordingly all-important that the guardians, in whose hands the state is to be placed, should know the nature of this good after which all men are groping. Justice and beauty and all the other ideas that should occupy a large part in their minds, are only satisfactorily known when the good is known. What then is the Good? Can Plato not explain it as he has already explained justice, temperance, and the other virtues? He frankly confesses himself unable to do so. The difficulty is in the nature of the subject; goodness, the all-inclusive end of life, which organises the system within which the special virtues have meaning, is not to be explained like these virtues. In place of a direct inquiry into the nature of the Good, he gives a suggestive analogy. The sun, he says, bears the same relation to sight and its objects in the visible world which the Idea of the Good bears to reason and its objects in the intellectual

<sup>1</sup> VI., 506-509.

world. In seeing, four elements are involved: (1) The seeing eye; (2) the object which it sees; (3) the light which is the relating medium, enabling the eye to see and the object to be seen; and (4) the sun which is the source of the light. To these there correspond in knowledge: (1) The intelligent subject; (2) the intelligible object; (3) the relation between subject and object; 1 and (4) the source of this √ inter-relation, the Idea of the Good. Then Plato draws out another point in the analogy. Just as the sun not only makes objects visible, but is the cause of their existence and growth, so the Good which makes all known things knowable is also the source of their being. Thus we get the conception of the Idea of the Good as the creative unity, from which the thinker and the world he thinks have come; and their common origin reveals itself in the fact that the one knows and the other is knowable.

In this way, by the help of the analogy, Plato has passed beyond the merely ethical

What Plato is trying to bring out here is expressed at VI., 490 by saying that the thinker and the objects of his thought are "akin."



conception of the Good as the end of all human action, which he shares with Socrates, and has given the Good a metaphysical significance as the end by relation to which all things that exist and the minds that know them form a systematic whole. Socrates had insisted that all particular actions derive their meaning from the principles underlying them. But he did not see that the same thing holds good in knowledge; that all particular things as known presuppose principles or ideas, and are only rightly known when known as ideal. Still less did he see that these ideas go beyond mere knowledge and define the being of things. Socrates, in short, was an unconscious idealist. It needed Plato, with a deeper metaphysical insight and with a knowledge of the earlier philosophies, to free the Socratic view from its limited ethical form, and to work it out into the doctrine of Ideas.

The idealistic view of the world, as developed by Plato, passed through different phases, that which appears in the *Republic* being one of the later forms.<sup>1</sup> In the earlier dialogues the real

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Certain aspects of the doctrine of ideas have already been discussed and illustrated in Chap. VI., Section 3.

world, the world of particulars perceived by sense, stands over against the world of ideas without relation to it. But in the later dialogues, Plato broke down this rigid antithesis by recognising that the world of ideas is the real or material world seen in its truth, and that the real world is only the ideal world imperfectly understood. Putting this in another way, we may say that when the philosopher escapes from the confusion of opinion to the Ideas of science, the world which at first seemed to consist of so many unrelated things, becomes for him a coherent system of ideas which at once explain and transcend the things of sense-perception. This system of ideas is really a system; there is as much difference in the worth of the different ideas as the ordinary man believes himself to see in the things that make up his so-called real world. There are ideas of greater and less importance, of greater and less content. The common ideas can be marshalled under wider and more comprehensive ideas, and these again under still wider. At the head of this hierarchy of ideas stands the most comprehensive of all ideas, the

Idea of the Good, in accordance with which the whole universe is ordered. As in human life there are moral principles of varying context, and all find a place in the Good, towards which men strive, so the different parts of the universe, "all thinking things, all objects of all thought," are bound together by this Idea of the Good.

It may be pointed out, by way of summary, that in the Republic three aspects of this Idea of the Good are shown. (1) The Idea of the Good is identified with the moral end, towards which men ever aspire, even when ignorant of what the end is, or why they seek it. (2) It is that unity which is presupposed in the relation of the thinker to the things thought. In the case of the thinker, it reveals itself as the idea of a system of knowledge which is progressively realised; with regard to the objects, it shows itself in the fact that they are knowable. (3) In it thought and being are one; it is the creative cause of the universe. As the allinclusive end, all things that are owe their being to it. 1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> C<sub>J</sub>. on this third point Nettleship (whose threefold division of the subject I follow in this paragraph): "The reality of

# Section 3.—The Dangers of the Study of Dialectic.1

Since the guardians must know the Idea of the Good, Dialectic, which is the science that is concerned with it, is an essential subject of study in the higher education. But Plato does not wish the young men to engage in this study till they reach the age of thirty. For this there are two reasons. In the first place, the proper study of philosophy calls for a certain preparation which is supplied in the ideal state during the years between the end of youth and the beginning of the philosophical studies. During these ten years, it will be remembered, the young man spends part of his time in the service of the state, all the while continuing his studies in science. In this way, he is not only learning to see things as ideal, but he is also acquiring that experience of life which is necessary for a philosopher.

The second reason is the more important,

things is what they mean; what they mean is determined by their place in the order of the world; what determines their place in the order of the world is the supreme good, the principle of that order. Thus their very being is determined by that order." Lectures, p. 231.

<sup>1</sup> VII., 537-539.

and we now go on to discuss it. It is the danger to character during the transition from faith to reason which is implied in philosophy. Those opinions which come to a man through his first education are taken on the authority of others, and are not his own by right of personal thought. The first step towards philosophy must, therefore, be a sceptical questioning of their worth: and this is easy, because the opinions taught through art and mythology, being inadequate expressions of the truths for which they stand, are not free from contradictions. But however necessary as a stage in education, this philosophic doubt is dangerous for certain minds. Plato gives a simple illustration of this. Imagine, he says, a youth who finds out that those whom he has been brought up to consider his parents are not really so. Will his discovery not cause the respect and obedience he was wont to give them to cease? Plato goes on to compare this case with that of the man who has been trained in good moral principles, but finds out that the authority on which he had received them was more or less fictitious. "We believe," he says, "that when

young men begin to criticise customary beliefs, or to analyse the constitution of human nature, they are apt to lose hold of solid principle." The danger is, that instead of going further and substituting for the external authority which formerly secured their obedience the authority of reasoned belief, they may make their doubts an excuse for lawlessness. It is the fear of this result that makes Plato postpone the education in Dialectic till the age of thirty. Younger men are apt to be, as he says, like puppy dogs which delight in tearing everything to pieces. When a man reaches the age of thirty he is likely to be established in character, and too well aware of the serious nature of the issues to delight in freaks of mere criticism.

The danger to faith and life through philosophy was real enough in the days of Plato. The movement of free thought, inaugurated by the Sophists, brought into disrepute the established order in religion and government, and there were some among the younger men who made freedom of thought an excuse for license. "Nor," to quote Jowett, "have we any difficulty in drawing a parallel between the young Athenian in the fifth century

before Christ, who became unsettled by new ideas, and the student of a modern university, who has been the subject of a similar 'Aufklärung.'" Plato thought to avoid the danger by leaving the youth in ignorance of philosophy. But when the spirit of doubt and criticism is in the air, whether in the modern world or in ancient Greece, such a course is hardly practicable. The only way of escape is not to avoid philosophy, but to know more of it.

# Section 4.—The Mathematical Sciences as a Preparation for Dialectic. 1

There is a sense in which the philosopher's knowledge of the Idea of the Good is not a peculiar possession; it may even be said to belong to every man, since in conduct every soul pursues the Good, and in seeking knowledge of any kind there is always the implication that the world is an inter-connected system of facts. The difference between the philosopher and his fellows is, that he is conscious of the unity which is always implied in morality and knowledge, while for them experience

<sup>1</sup> VII., 522-531.

seems but a manifold of particular facts. But the difference is not due to some peculiar philosophic instinct. It is the result of the soul's growth under the influence of education. The philosopher begins with the same mental experiences as others, but by the help of mythology and art he rises above them; then comes scepticism as to the worth of the principles imparted by this first education, and, last of all, reflection and the search for ideas, leading ultimately to the Good.

In this development of the soul, the mathematical sciences play a notable part as a preparation for the study of philosophy. The scientific education begins with the principles of Arithmetic; then follows Plane and Solid Geometry; and last of all, because most complex, comes the mathematical theory of Astronomy and Harmonics. These have all, more or less, a practical value, and Plato admits that it may be worth while for the guardians to study them with this in view. At the same time, he would rather have them studied for their own sake. Practical Mathematics tends to be concrete where education calls for abstraction; and in any case there is

no reason to confine the study of a subject within the limits of what is of value in practice. On the other hand, he would not have these studies conducted as scientists had usually conducted them. Astronomy, for example, must not be a mere record of observations; the student must be directed to its problems and encouraged to attempt their solution.

The importance attached by Plato to the mathematical sciences as means of education finds its explanation to some extent in the influence of the Pythagoreans, to whom he attributes part of his mathematical curriculum. The saying that "God always geometrises," which is credited to him by a later writer, whether it be authentic or not, certainly expresses a tendency on the part of Plato to follow the Pythagoreans in making Mathematics the key to open up the ideal world. But it would be a mistake to exaggerate this element in Plato's thinking, important as it undoubtedly was. The doctrine of ideas had its origin in the ethical discussions of Socrates; and the ideas of justice, goodness, beauty, and the like, which had been the subjects of these discussions, played at least as large a part as

the ideas derived from Mathematics, in determining the ultimate character of Plato's philosophy. As a matter of fact, in the Republic and the other dialogues of the same period, his discussion about ideas takes him beyond Ethics and Mathematics; but at the same time it is evident that the ideas in which he is most interested fall within these two provinces. Hence, when he came to ask himself about the education which was to lead to the highest knowledge, it was inevitable that the two orders of ideas which had attracted him most should seem the most effective instruments in the course of education. He saw, however, that though in both cases the thinker is dealing with ideas, there was a difference between the ideas of Mathematics and the ideas of Ethics. Mathematics, with ideas that could be pictured and with unexamined presuppositions, more easily connected itself with ordinary knowledge, and did not in the first instance raise the ultimate questions of philosophy. Thus he was led to make Mathematics the propædeutic to philosophy. In doing so, he gave it the place in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See Section 5.

education which the modern thinker gives to the sciences in general; and of necessity, since it was the only science at all well developed at that time.

According to Plato, the mathematical sciences prepare the mind for philosophy in two ways. In the first place, they compel reflection, and thus force the soul from opinion to knowledge. The essential difference between the first knowledge of things, which Plato calls Opinion, and knowledge or Science, is not so much in the matter of knowledge as in the way in which the mind holds its knowledge. Opinion is the first indefinite knowledge before reflection has been at work; Science is the clear, consistent knowledge that comes to the soul which has criticised its own ideas, and seen them in their relations. If, therefore, the soul is to pass beyond the confusion of Opinion, it must be compelled to reflect. Now, there is a difference in the power of objects to stimulate Plato gives a simple illustration. Look, he says, at the little finger, and the two next it. All are equally fingers; about any one of them we can say, "This is a finger,"

and there is nothing in this judgment to make the mind go beyond the stated fact, to make it ask, for example, what a finger is. If, however, we consider the length of the middle one of the three, we find ourselves in a difficulty. Compared with the little finger, it is long; compared with the finger on the other side, it is short. The contradiction involved in calling the same thing both long and short leads the mind to reflect on the idea of length. From this illustration it is easy to see how the sciences compel the mind to reflect. The facts of experience with which they deal suffer change in the process; they are no longer viewed in their isolation as single facts, but by selection and rearrangement are brought into relation to each other, and to the general principles which they exemplify. Thus arises the contrast between the appearance of things and the ideal presentment of them, in which, according to science, is their reality. The result is a sense of contradiction, and contradiction stimulates the mind to further inquiry into the nature of its ideas. Plato gives as an example from Arithmetic the idea of unity

which is implied in all numeration. Whence comes the idea of unity? Not from seeing, or any of the senses. "The same thing," as Plato points out, "presents at the same moment the appearance of one thing, and an infinity of things." 1 But if what we call "one" thing is in other points of view many things, why do we call it "one?" And the answer is that its "oneness" is due to the activity of the mind, which selects the many things and groups them under one idea. Now, Plato's point is that the contradiction between the manifold that makes up the one and the idea of unity, compels the mind to think out what it means by unity. Contradiction leads to reflection, and reflection brings about the soul's conversion from Opinion to the true knowledge of things through their ideas.

In the second place, the sciences prepare the soul for the study of philosophy by giving it knowledge in the form of ideas. We may take geometry by way of illustration. The students of geometry, Plato says,<sup>2</sup> "summon

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The body, for example, which we usually think of as "one," appears to the anatomist a multitude of organs, and to the histologist an indefinitely great number of cells.

<sup>2</sup> VI., 510.

to their aid visible forms and discourse about them, though their thoughts are busy, not with these forms, but with their originals, and though they discourse not with a view to the particular square and diameter which they draw, but with a view to the square itself and the diameter itself." In other words, what the mathematician deals with is not any one square, but the idea of a square. The figure may be incorrectly drawn, and it may vary in size; these things do not affect his idea of the square. The figure is but the symbol of the idea. In like fashion all the facts of experience are transformed by science. They are no longer treated as isolated facts, but acquire a new value as symbols, and their reality for the scientist is given by the ideas they symbolise. Since, then, the sciences present the world in the form of ideas, their study is a preparation for the knowledge of the supreme idea, the Idea of the Good. If the world is rational through and through, men can be best educated to see its rational order by a study of the laws which hold good in the particular facts with which the special sciences deal. After they have seen the reign of law in

varied forms, they may enter upon the study of Dialectic, and by viewing the world as a whole, see the relation of the scientific laws to one another and to the one highest law.

### Section 5.—Dialectic.1

The work of education begun by the sciences must be completed. "The faculty of dialectic² can alone reveal the truth, and only to one who is master of the sciences." So far as they go, the sciences give a knowledge of the real existence of things, but at best they are fragmentary. They suffer from a two-fold limitation. In the first place, they are dependent upon a sensuous experience. The geometrician thinks of the square itself (the square, that is, as an idea), but all the while he has before him the picture of some actual square. It may be true that it is no actual square which occupies his thoughts, but the fact remains that apart from a sensuously given picture, his ideal square could not be

<sup>1</sup> VII., 532-534.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The term Dialectic used by Plato for Philosophy, the ideal science which aims at completing the other sciences by viewing the world as a unity, meant originally the discourse by which philosophical inquiries were conducted in question and answer form.

thought. So again the motions of the heavenly bodies, which the astronomer has to study, are not perceived by the senses; but the motions, which, as such, are thought, are the motions of sense-perceived bodies. In the second place, the sciences always start from hypotheses of which they give no account. By the word "hypothesis" Plato does not mean, as a modern thinker would, a theory temporarily assumed to be true, which must be abandoned if found inconsistent with further facts. A "hypothesis" means for him a truth which is treated as a first principle, when it really depends on higher principles. Thus, for example, geometry rests upon the conception of space, which it makes no attempt to examine. An example from modern science is the idea of causality, which scientists constantly employ in speaking of causes and effects, without asking what a "cause" means, or to what facts the term is properly applicable. The sciences, therefore, are hypothetical in the sense that their fundamental ideas are taken for granted, without any justification of their use, or any suggestion of their relation to the general unity of knowledge.

The ideas with which Dialectic deals, on

the other hand, are such as no sense-given picture can symbolise. Moreover, Dialectic is unhypothetical. It starts with the hypotheses of science, but does not take them as ultimate truths. From them it passes upwards to the all-comprehending Good, the one chief principle on which they all depend, but which is itself not dependent on anything beyond itself. Dialectic is thus justly called completed science. It is not one science among the others; it is the science which includes them all, the science which lies "like a coping-stone on the top of the sciences," and makes the pile complete. Each of them deals with a particular set of facts, and makes use of particular ideas. It alone can survey them from the vantage point of the whole, and give them their places in the scale of existence.

# Section 6.—The Four Stages in Education.1

It may serve as a summary of the previous discussions to consider briefly the illustration of the divided line by which Plato seeks to show the relationship of the various stages of the mind's growth and their connection with

<sup>1</sup> VI., 509-511.

the knowledge of the Good. The main points may be put in the diagrammatic form suggested by Plato:

THE WORLD OF OPINION | THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD

Conjecture | Belief | Science | Philosophy

The line is divided into two parts—unequal parts, Plato says, but as he works out the illustration, that is immaterial. The one part represents the visible world, the world of opinion and of the changing; the other part the intelligible world, the world of real existence. Both parts are again divided into two. In the world of opinion there are two sets of objects. The one includes the things that are called real from the point of view of opinion, "the animals about us, and everything that grows and is made": these are known by the activity of mind which Plato here calls belief. The other set comprises the shadows and copies of actual things and even the things themselves when only superficially known: the knowledge of these is referred to a faculty of image-making or conjecture. In the intelligible world, the division of parts is that which has been discussed in the last section. Science

has special reference to the mathematical sciences, and philosophy is dialectic, which apprehends the world as a whole in the light of first principles.

Now, the chief point to be brought out by the illustration is this: the knowledge given by dialectic stands in the same relation to the knowledge given by the sciences, as the knowledge of the things that are called real at the stage of opinion does to the knowledge given by their shadows. There is thus suggested the course of the mind's education. It begins on the surface of things with mere guess work or conjecture. Even from the point of view of opinion, of which it is a phase, this first knowledge has the unreality of a shadow. Worse even than ordinary opinion, it deals, as Plato says, in Book X., "with something twice removed from the truth." 1 Out of this state of confusion and ignorance emerges belief or common sense. Though knowledge is still mixed with much that is irrelevant, there is at this stage some kind of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The discussion of Art in Book X. leads Plato to bracket with this first superficial knowledge of things the knowledge given by painting, poetry, and rhetoric.

certainty, the certainty that comes from dealing with actual things, even when their real nature is very imperfectly understood. So far, however, the mind is still in the region of opinion, and the escape from opinion is not made till the third stage. At this stage, the mind is no longer dealing with disconnected particulars, but is engaged in the study of objects from the point of view of science. Knowledge is now concerned with ideas or laws. Last of all the stage of intelligence or philosophy, the mind is not hampered in its knowe of the world, as it is in the sciences, by E sensuous form of its knowledge and by ncriticised hypotheses. This is the true philosophic knowledge which comprehends all things in their unity in relation to the Idea of the Good.

# CHAPTER VIII

#### THE THEORY OF EDUCATION

## Section 1.—The Allegory of the Cave.1

THE celebrated Allegory of the Cave, which begins the Seventh Book, illustrates in considerable detail the stages of the soul's education, and the transitions from the lower to the higher stages. Imagine, Plato says, a number of men, chained from their childhood in an underground cavern. Above and behind them a bright fire burns which causes the shadows of all objects that pass along the highway between them and the fire to be cast on the walls. The men are so shackled that they can only see these shadows; even their neighbours in the cave are only known by their shadows on the wall. Along the road pass men bearing statues of men and animals; the men who carry them are out of sight, so that the prisoners see only the shadows of the statues, which accordingly appear to them the only realities. If now by some chance one of the prisoners should be freed and made to turn round to the light of the fire, his eyes would be dazzled and pained, and the shadows from which he had turned away would still appear clearer than the blurred impressions he gets of the things themselves. Still more would this be true if he were forced into the sunlight. After a time, however, his eyes would grow accustomed to the brightness, and he would become able to see the real things, and to understand that what he had formerly seen were only shadows. If now he should return to the cave, his knowledge of the shadows would undoubtedly be better than that of those who had remained in the darkness; but so long as the change from light to darkness made his sight dim, he would appear to his fellows to have lost what knowledge he had, by his ascent to the upper world.

The interpretation of the myth is easy. The cave-dwellers are the mass of men; the prisoner who escapes to the light, is the man who by chance ("by nature," Plato says), ascends painfully by the way of the sciences

to the real world, as seen in the Idea of the Good. So far this is only illustrative of the account of the soul's progress which has already been given. But Plato now adds, by way of commentary on the myth, his theory of education. If his view is correct, education does not mean the instilling into the mind a knowledge which it did not previously possess. That, as he says, would be like giving sight to the blind, and is impossible. From absolute ignorance it is impossible to educate the soul to knowledge. Education is rather to be compared to the turning of the eyes towards the light. It is a turning or conversion of the soul, as a result of which all the powers which it has possessed from the beginning develop and mature.

The significance of this comparison may be brought out by reference to another which has played no small part in educational thinking, the comparison of the soul to a plant. "The nature which we have appropriated to the

¹ The metaphor dominates the thinking of Pestalozzi and all those who have come under his influence. It has in this way affected deeply nineteenth century thought and action in education.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> VI., 492.

philosopher," he says, "must, I think, provided it meets with proper teaching, grow and attain to all excellence! but if it be sown, planted, and nourished on an ungenial soil, it is sure to run into all the opposite vices." These two comparisons bring out clearly how Plato thought of the subject matter of education. The soul is not trained by the additions of new knowledge, but by laying hold of presented realities, assimilating them by its own activity, making them part of itself. But the important aspect of this growth of the soul is not what it assimilates, but what it becomes in the process of assimilating. Like the plant, its response to the external influences is determined by its own character; and the final stage in its growth is a revelation of that character.

## Section 2.—Education as Reminiscence.

The view of the soul, which underlies Plato's discussion of its education, is presented by him in a more suggestive, if not more definite form, in an earlier dialogue, the *Meno*. The problem there discussed is whether virtue can be taught, and the course of the argument brings

up a current Sophistic dilemma about the nature of teaching. It is impossible to learn anything new, certain Sophists argued; because learning either means a transition from ignorance to knowledge, from something unknown to something known, or it is a transition from knowledge to knowledge. In the one case it is impossible; in the other, profitless. This dilemma may be stated in another form. In any argument the conclusion either goes beyond the premises and tells us something new, or it simply repeats in a new way what has been already said, and proves nothing. In the former case, it does what it has no right to do; in the latter, what it does is not worth doing. If the dilemma be accepted, all thinking is an absurdity. But Plato refuses to accept the dilemma; he will not admit that education is either the production of something out of nothing, or the vain repetition of something already known. There is a sense in which knowledge acquired both is and is not something new, and his answer to the Sophists, bringing out this twofold aspect of education, is given in his theory of Reminiscence.

The case of recollection in ordinary knowledge is obviously one to which the Sophistic dilemma is not applicable. A fact we have forgotten is in one way unknown; and yet it is not as if we had never known it. It follows then that the alternatives, knowing or not knowing, are not exclusive. Now, ordinary recollection only applies to particular facts which have occurred in our experience; but Plato applies the principle suggested in this way to our knowledge of ideas. "All inquiry and all learning," he says, in this dialogue, "is but recollection"—recollection. that is, not only of facts, but of ideas. He expresses himself in the form of a myth, which he quotes with approval as the utterance of certain wise men. According to them, the soul of man is immortal, and passes through successive periods of existence, now being born into one existence, now dying and passing out of it, but never being destroyed. In the course of these successive experiences, it wanders through the upper and the under worlds, and learns all that is to be known; and though it forgets much of what it learns,1

<sup>1</sup> Why should the soul forget? Plato's answer is given in

yet what has been once known is never lost, and may be recalled by the proper associations. This recollection by association is possible, because the whole universe is akin, and so at whatever part of its existence the soul is, it may find something to recall what it once has known. This explains learning. In learning, the mind is but recollecting what it has already known in some previous state of existence. Meno's slave, from whom is elicited the Pythagorean theorem that the square on the diagonal of a square is double the square on its side, must already have had the principle in his mind; and the inference is that those ideas which were elicited from him without any teaching have been learned in some past life.

In speaking of the soul as getting its ideas in some prior existence, Plato is not to be taken too literally. The very fact that he expresses his opinion in the form of a myth is an indication that he was only groping his

the *Timaeus*, 44. The soul on its first entry into a body loses its rational character by doing so. It is only in the course of its development, under the influence of education, that the life of sensation with which it begins its career in a body changes into a life of reason.

way, helping himself along by an analogy, and doubtful how far his analogy would take him towards the truth. Recollection is always concerned with particular facts, knowledge of which implies a sense experience. What his theory of reminiscence tries to explain is not how the mind knows particulars, but how it knows the universal principles, in which their reality consists; and these universals are not seen, either in this or in any other world. If this were all that the idea of the soul's preexistence meant, it would only push the difficulty of the beginnings of knowledge a stage further back, without really solving it. What Plato seems to be trying to express by his myth is that ideas, unlike particulars, are bound up with the very nature of the soul and are the soul. In short, what we have here is the same conception as underlies the comparison of the soul to a plant and the description of education as a turning of the eye of the soul. In all these figures is implied the view of mind which is common to all the great idealists, and which is to be found, for example, in different but kindred forms in Aristotle and in Kant. From this

point of view, education is an evolution of the soul. The ideas are, so to speak, latent in it at first, and only in the course of its training are they drawn out into the clear consciousness in which it knows them as ideas.

But while in this aspect of it, education is a process of analysis which elicits from the mind what was already in it, it is more. A mere process of analysis implies that the soul's development goes on in independence of the world. But throughout its whole course the soul grows in response to the external stimulus. In the language of the myth, the ideas are called forth by something in experience, with which in some prior state they have been associated: that is to say, the impulse to growth is given by the soul's discovery that it is "akin" to the world it knows. Now, different things appeal to the soul at different stages of its growth, and the task of the educator is to provide appropriate objects at each stage. In the first education, the instruments of education are mythology and art. At this period the soul does not know its own ideas. Yet that the ideas are present is shown by its fondness for beautiful things; for beautiful things, as we have already seen (Chap. IV., Section 6), come nearest to revealing the ideas that lie concealed in all particular things. In the second education, the soul is at a higher level. Reason has begun to develop, and the soul is no longer satisfied with beauty, but must have truth: accordingly, the sciences meet its needs, and lead it forward till through Dialectic it reaches the all-comprehensive truth, the Good. But while the means of education vary with the time of life and the growth of experience, there is no difference in the end to be attained. All through, the soul is impelled forward by the sense of its kinship with what it knows, and the goal of its education is to find that the Good, which it seeks in its every action from the beginning, is that principle of unity which is immanent in all the particulars of experience.

## CHAPTER IX

#### THE IMPERFECT STATES

## Section 1.—The Decline of the Ideal State.1

BOOKS VIII, and IX, are the direct continuation of the argument of the first four Books. In these Books Plato attempted to answer the question, "What is Justice?" He found that there are three elements in the state, the governors and their soldier auxiliaries on the one side, the common people on the other. Corresponding to these in the individual man are the three parts of the soul, Reason, Spirit, and the Passions. Justice both in states and individuals consists in the balance of these parts: reason ruling the passions with the help of spirit, and the lower element recognising the right of the higher to rule. Books VIII. and IX. the argument is carried a step further. So far Plato has only dealt with the perfect state in which the due

<sup>1</sup> VIII., 543—IY., 580.

proportions are maintained, and this he has asserted is the only happy state. Here he shows that the happiness of the state depends upon its justice, by bringing forward the cases in which the balance of power has been upset by the predominance of one of the lower elements. The imperfect states which result from this disturbance are placed by him in a descending scale, each state being further removed from the ideal than its predecessor. At the head of the list is the perfect state, the Aristocracy, government by the best. The first stage in the decline of the ideal state is the Timocracy, government by the ambitions, which readily passes into the second stage, Oligarchy, government by the rich. As the rich become weak, the Oligarchy gives way to the Democracy, the government in which there is perfect equality, because the rulers have been picked by lot. Last, and worst of all, there results from the Democracy a Tyranny in which government is in the hands

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The word is coined by Plato himself. Though there were states of this kind in existence, such as Sparta, which he instances, they called themselves Aristocracies; Plato, however, wishes to keep the word Aristocracy for the ideal state where the rulers are really the best.

of an absolute irresponsible ruler. Such in logical order is the history of the perfect state's decline and fall.

(a) Timocracy—The Timocracy is the best of the imperfect states, and the nearest approach to the ideal in actual existence.2 "Everything that has come into being," says Plato, "must one day perish"; and thus even the perfect state has its periods of decline, when the level of culture falls and men of the baser sort are selected as rulers. In consequence of this bad selection, more attention is paid to gymnastic than to music in the training of the young, with the result that the self-assertive spirit is fostered among them. Hence follow dissensions among the guardians. and greater readiness to make war with other states. The men of wisdom are thus set aside. and the government passes into the hands of the warrior class, who from their disposition and training are men of ambitious spirit. The defects of this state, in which men no

It has to be noted here that this sketch of Plato's is not meant to be historical. As in his account of the origin of the city state (Chap. II., Section 2.), he has expressed in the outward form of history a development which is primarily logical.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Plato refers to Sparta as an example.

longer make truth their end in life, but seek recognition and honour for themselves, show themselves in the institution of private property among the guardians. In the end, since only a few can obtain the coveted honours, the citizens as a body become mere slaves, with no interest in the welfare of the state.

Plato regards the timocratic state as that which most nearly approaches the ideal among the imperfect states, because love of honour which is the mark of its citizens is the least objectionable form of selfishness. To seek honour from worthy men is indeed not selfishness at all, for such honour can only be got by being a worthy man. So in the perfect state, where the best men rule, and render honour where it is due, the love of honour is not bad. But in the timocratic state, it is not the best men who rule, but men who care more for honour than for ruling well. And so honourseeking for its own sake, and without regard to the grounds on which it is sought, is a sign of deterioration in the state.

The timocratic man is the product of this society: in him reason has ceased to be

supreme, and the ruling motive is self-assertion or spirit, the desire for personal distinction. The account which Plato gives of him is that he is the son of a philosopher in a state which affords no scope for the exercise of philosophic gifts. Being full of ambition, he follows the suggestions of his mother and his dependents, and refuses to be a man like his father, with no share in public life. Accordingly, he seeks distinction in the service of the state for the sake of the reputation it brings.

(b) Oligarchy—The transition from the timocracy to the oligarchy is easy. The man who craves distinction is a self-seeker, and self-seeking when exaggerated passes into avarice. In course of time the tendency to avarice expresses itself openly in a government carried on by men whose whole aim is money-making. By the imposition of a property qualification as a condition of political rights, the business of government is confined to the rich. The evil consequences of this are evident. The possession of money no more fits a man for ruling than for being the pilot of a ship: hence it is not the best men who rule, but only the rich,

who are thus as dangerous to the state as an ignorant pilot to a ship. What is even worse than this is the splitting up of the state into two antagonistic factions, the rich and the poor, to whom the constitution of the state denies a common interest. The few become rich at the expense of the many, and with the increase of their wealth there comes an increase in pauperism and crime. Further, since the rich fear the poor too much to give them military training, and all the while the pursuit of riches makes them less and less fit for fighting themselves, the strength of the state declines.

The oligarchic state is still further removed from the ideal than the timocracy. The timocracy set up as the end of life the satisfaction of the desire for distinction—that is, it made the spirited element in man, which is the element most akin to reason, of supreme importance. But the oligarchic state is based on the passions—an element still lower. For the desire for wealth is but the highest and least enslaving form of the desire for the material goods of life. It is not that Plato objects to wealth in its own place; but in .

becoming the end of life, wealth has usurped the place of reason and spirit. Its proper function is to be the means to the higher life. In the oligarchy it ceases to be means, and becomes end.

Corresponding to the oligarchic state is the oligarchic man, whose main aim in life is to make money. Plato represents him as the son of a timocratic man, who held high position in the army or in the state, and whose life had been ruined by the unjust treatment of his rivals. The son, disgusted at his father's fate, betakes himself to commerce and a private life. The vices of such a man are the same as those of the oligarchy. He is covetous and parsimonious. Externally he does not appear a bad man, but his virtue is a false kind. If he does not indulge his beggarly or criminal appetites, it is not because these appetites are tamed by reason and proper ambition; for reason has become the slave of the desire for money, condemned to devote itself to devising means for the increase of wealth. It is only his meanness and parsimony that prevent him from indulging passion.

(c) Democracy 1—The passions, once given the mastery of life, even in the refined form of the desire for wealth, make headway. Hence arises out of the Oligarchy a worse state which Plato calls Democracy. In the oligarchic state greed is encouraged by making wealth the chief interest of life; it is every man's interest to get as much as he can for himself. The result is that as time goes on the gulf between rich and poor becomes wider, but so engrossed are the rich in their business that they fail to keep in mind the hostile feelings of the poor, and become less and less fit for military duties. At last, the people discover the weakness of their masters, and having

1 It will be noted that democracy does not mean for Plato what it means for us. In a modern democracy, the adult male & Jamas population has some control over the affairs of the country, but the actual work of government is delegated, by election or otherwise, to the men thought best able to do it. The Athenian democracy, to take as example the best Greek democracy, differed from this in two important respects: (1) There was a large population of slaves, probably, more than half the community, who had no share in political life; (2) Government was done on the principle that one man was as good as another. All the important business of the state was carried on by the general assembly of all the citizens, which had supreme power. The detailed business was managed by a council of five hundred citizens, who, like all the officials of the state with the exception of the generals, were chosen by lot.

learned from them the desire for wealth, overrule them and introduce a Democracy. In this new state, all rank disappears; every man is as good as his neighbour. The rule of the day is complete license. No man requires to take any share in state affairs unless he likes, and law is trodden underfoot. To prevent any man rising above his fellows, all the state officials are elected by lot.

The sway of caprice and passion which is the characteristic of the democratic state. involves a deeper degradation than that shown in the craving for wealth. The desire for wealth gives life some kind of principle and unity, however imperfect. The men of wealth preserved at least a semblance of order in the state, just as the love of money kept the passions to some extent under control. But in the democracy the equality of the citizens means an anarchy of conflicting interests, in which there is no unity. Plato illustrates the character of democracy by a distinction between two kinds of passions. necessary appetites with which money-getting is concerned, are those which must form a part of a man's life, and which in a good man are guided by reason. The unnecessary appetites are those which are useless in a well-regulated life, and which can be educated away. In the democratic state there is the same indifference to all distinctions of what is necessary and what is unnecessary as there is in the man of passions. Goodness and badness disappear in the license of perfect freedom from state control.

The democratic man similarly shows a decline compared with the oligarchic man, whose miserly habits made him put a certain restraint upon himself. According to Plato, he is the son of the oligarchic man, and his falling off as compared with his father is due to the bad training he gets. When the time of temptation comes he has no "beautiful pursuits and right principles" by which to ward off evil, with the result that the passions, necessary and unnecessary, are indulged by him without limit. The democratic man is thus a man in whom the central passion for wealth has been displaced by an anarchy of conflicting appetites. He thinks himself free, by which he means that he is able to live as the caprice of the moment dictates. In

reality, his life is devoid of all principle, and he is carried away by every new interest. Now he is a philosopher, again he is a statesman, or a soldier, or an athlete. At other times, he gives himself up to an idle and licentious life.

(d) Despotism—The final stage in the downward course is the Despotism. There is a law of reaction, as Plato points out, in the whole universe, "not only in the seasons of the year and in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, but also especially in commonwealths." Hence there arises out of the absolute freedom of the democracy the slavery of a despotism; just as the pursuit of wealth brought the oligarchy to ruin, so the pursuit of a licentious freedom makes an end of all freedom. The democracy encourages unscrupulous adventurers to come to the front. When a time of crisis comes, the most able among these puts himself at the head of the state, nominally to protect the workers from the rich men whom they regard as their enemies, and he seizes the opportunity to make himself absolute ruler. The people gladly give him a bodyguard to protect him against his and their enemies, and he then

uses this force to make the people obey him. Once at the head of the state, he is compelled to persevere in tyranny, if he wishes to retain his position. In this way, the slavery of the people becomes ever more complete. Democracy has thus passed into Despotism.

The tyrant is himself the most pronounced type of the man who resembles the state of tyranny. In him one single lust has become predominant, and his whole soul, reason, spirit, and passion, is given up to its satisfaction. His opportunities for its satisfaction are the more complete because his position in the state enables him to indulge himself without the restraint which is put upon such self-indulgence in weaker men. But it may be asked, as Plato asks, whether this kind of life is really satisfactory. The question at once takes us back to the contention of Thrasymachus at the very beginning of the discussion, that the man who finds life best worth living is the man of consummate injustice, who combines power with the inclination to injustice. So far as the tyrant is concerned, Plato finds no difficulty in the question. He is of all men most miserable,

just because he is a tyrant. There is no man to forbid his slightest whim, but in no true sense is he a freeman. "The soul which is under a tyrant," says Plato, "is least capable of doing what it desires." It lives for ever in "a fury of passions and desires"; although it is free to give them vent, it is really enslaved by them, and must indulge them whether it finds satisfaction in them or not. And not only has the tyrant lost freedom of soul, but he is not really free in his relations with his fellows. By overmastering his fellows and making every man his slave, he has cut himself off from men. His hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against him. As the penalty of his supremacy he lives in constant dread, and in spite of his own wishes, is forced to sink ever deeper into vice. Not only must he flatter the worst men in the state, but constant danger makes him jealous and suspicious of the best, and he is compelled to purge the city of all the most upright citizens. Hence the verdict must be given that only by just living can happiness come, and that the unjust man, even when most powerful, is the most unhappy of men. The failure of his life, within and without, is the

proof that self-seeking is bad both for the individual and for the state.

#### Section 2.—The three Types of Pleasure.1

Having come back in the course of his argument to the old question of the profit of injustice, Plato proceeds to discuss the question more fully in its bearings on the individual. There are three chief types of men, as he has already shown: the lover of wisdom, the ambitious or spirited man who loves honour, and the sensual man whose characteristic is the desire for money and the free indulgence of the passions. As each of these has his own peculiar pleasure, the question as to which man leads the best life resolves itself into a comparison of these pleasures. Plato has no difficulty in giving his award in favour of the philosopher, the lover of wisdom. Although each of the three types of men claims that his own way of living is most pleasant, it is only the man who finds his pleasure in wisdom who is able to decide the point. The man of appetite has no experience of any pleasures other than those of appetite." The spirited man has in addition to the pleasures

of appetite those which come from gratified ambitions, but knows nothing of the pleasures of wisdom. These are peculiar to the experience of the wise man; and as he, in spite of his experience of the lower pleasures, prefers the pleasures of wisdom, his preference is held by Plato to settle the question. For not only is his experience most comprehensive, including and going beyond that of other men, but to him belongs in a special degree the capacity for reasoning, which a proper comparison of the different ways of life demands.

From this argument Plato proceeds to another which he considers even more decisive. In this final argument, he undertakes to prove that the pleasures of the wise man are most real, and that in comparison with them the pleasures of the sensual and of the ambitious man are illusory. He makes clear, in the first place, what he means by pleasure. "Are not hunger and thirst and similar sensations," he asks, "a kind of emptiness of the bodily constitution?" Again: "Similarly, are not ignorance and folly an emptiness of the mental constitution?" Now, pleasure and pain are "the motions" by which

this emptying and filling are brought about. Stated more definitely, the implication of these questions (as a noteworthy discussion in the *Timaeus* shows) is that pain consists in a disturbance of body or mind, and that pleasure is the process of restoration which brings back things to the normal condition. Accordingly, every desire implies some lack, and if it be left unsatisfied, pain is the consequence. With satisfaction, on the other hand, comes a filling, that is to say, pleasure.

But all those experiences which men ordinarily call pleasure are not to be regarded as on the same level. Among the objects in which the soul seeks its satisfaction at the prompting of desire, there are very different degrees of reality. Thus it comes that some things are better able to satisfy the soul than others. Meat and drink, to take Plato's example, are less real than knowledge and virtue, and therefore satisfy the soul less. Judged from this point of view, the pleasures of the philosopher who finds his satisfaction in truth are most real, while the pleasures of gratified sense are least real. That the inferiority of the lower pleasures is not

recognised by the great mass of men is due to their wrong notions about pleasure and pain. The pleasures of sense only seem to be true pleasures by contrast with the pains of preceding desires. As the healthy man does not appreciate health until he regains it after sickness, so the sensual man mistakes the cessation of pain for true pleasure. Between pleasure and pain, according to Plato, there is a midway state, which is neither pleasure nor pain, the state of balance between the emptiness which is pain, and the fulness which is pleasure. It is this midway state which the man who has never enjoyed true pleasure ignorantly calls pleasure. As compared with this negative condition, the higher pleasures come to the soul at those times when it has to do with the unchanging realities of knowledge and virtue. A sensual satisfaction, such as that of eating or drinking, only yields pleasure in the moment of desire; and so with all pleasures associated with the manifold of changing things, which lack the permanence of real existence. It is not that they have no reality, but only that they do not satisfy the whole soul. Their true place is as elements in the broader life of the wise man. When, as in the case of the sensualist, they are taken in independence, they prove their insufficiency by their failure to unify life. Thus again the superiority of wisdom is demonstrated.

This whole discussion labours under the disadvantage of a false start.¹ Plato's opponents, arguing from a Hedonistic point of view, had asserted that the unjust life is the most pleasant, and Plato meets them on their own ground with the counter-assertion. But the question whether justice or injustice is the more pleasant really admits of no answer. If Plato says that the man of reason prefers his own pleasures in spite of his experience of other forms of pleasure, and that therefore they are superior to those of the sensual man

¹ The reason for the false start is that Plato uses the word "pleasure" rather loosely, sometimes speaking of it as if it were a state of feeling, sometimes (as here) identifying it with "happiness" or "self-satisfaction." Despite the confusion of phraseology, his attitude with regard to the place of pleasure in life is not doubtful. He did not think with the Hedonists that in all action man seeks pleasure. His position is much like that of Aristotle, though less defined. He would probably have agreed with him in regarding pleasure as only an accompaniment of happiness. The implication of the present passage is that the feeling of pleasure comes when an object desired as likely to satisfy the self has been obtained.

or of the honour-seeker, it is open to an opponent to argue that the experiences of the wise man are distorted by his wisdom, and that for each man his own manner of living is best and most pleasant. Strictly speaking, if pleasure be made the test by which to decide the case, there ceases to be any criterion of conduct. The value of pleasure as pleasure is purely a matter for the individual, and there can be no higher life and no lower, because no pleasures as such are more real than others. What Plato has done has been to substitute for the pleasure that accompanies satisfied desire, the idea of the satisfaction of life as a whole. The question which he discusses is not which type of man has most pleasure in life, but which way of living is most satisfactory. And his answer is that the just life is in every way best, because in doing injustice a man is violating his nature as a rational being. This means that when a man decides on a certain course of action, it is not because it is most pleasant, but because it fits in with a certain idea of himself. The discussion has in this way shifted from its original Hedonistic form, and the idea of a certain character,

and not pleasure, has become the test of conduct.

### Section 3.—The Argument Concluded.1

The connected argument of the Republic comes to an end with a fanciful representation of the soul of man as a complex of animals. First there is a many-headed monster, with a ring of heads of wild and tame beasts. Then is added the character of a lion and that of a man. To this composite creature is given the human form, and thus the picture of the soul is completed. The application is obvious. If it be asserted that it is not a man's interest to do justice, the reply is that by being unjust the real man is enfeebled, and the brutal parts of his nature, both the many-headed desires and the lion spirit, are strengthened: but that if a man be just, wisdom, which is the distinctively human element of the soul, keeps the lower elements in their proper places, and establishes a harmony of parts. It thus appears conclusively that justice, which is this harmony, is more profitable than injustice.

From this Plato draws the conclusion that

<sup>1</sup> IX., 588-592.

the state, having as its function the production of just men, is not a foreign taskmaster, as the Sophists had said, but the outward expression of human reason. It does indeed seem as though a man's freedom were being taken away when he is compelled to submit to law. But the intention of law, alike in the case of the youth who is being educated and of the citizen of mature years, is to form the character, so that the time may come when the law without will have its counter-part in the wellregulated soul within. For man is a rational being, and his only true life is in obedience to reason. It is best that this reason should be in the man's own soul, as it is in the case of the philosopher. But so long as he lacks power to control himself, the state and its laws may force him to self-control. And man and state being alike rational, submission to the state is not the submission of the weak to an outward restraint, but a recognition of the right of reason to rule human life.

Freedom in this way comes to mean obedience to law. The complete moral life, it is true, implies citizenship in the ideal city. But even though this city is not to be found

anywhere on earth, even though it must for ever remain a pattern of a city laid up in heaven, the good man, by keeping its divine perfection ever before him, may reproduce its constitution in his own soul. His practices will be such as become one of its citizens, and though only a providential chance would enable him to do his best work in the politics of his time, the city he has "planted within himself" will have its influence on his life as a citizen of an actual city.

# CHAPTER X

#### BOOK X

## Section 1.—The Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry.1

THE Tenth Book introduces abruptly, and discusses in a somewhat fragmentary way, two subjects. The first of these is a continuation of what has been already said in Books II. and III. about the place of art in life. The other is the immortality of the soul, and its relation to the moral life in this world.

The earlier discussion seems to have called forth considerable opposition to the strictures passed on art. And the fact that Plato himself felt the charms of poetry doubtless gave this opposition a considerable weight with him. He would gladly permit his citizens to enjoy poetry if any good reasons could be given to justify its existence in a well-regulated state. He is thus compelled to re-open the question, but his conclusion remains as before. Poetry,

<sup>1</sup> X., 595-608.

particularly the drama and imitative art in general, in spite of the pleasure they give, exert an evil influence in the state. In taking this view, he is, as he says, renewing a longstanding quarrel between philosophy and poetry. Both deal in their own ways with the great subjects of the moral and political life. The charge which he makes against poetry in the name of philosophy, is that the principles which the poets teach are superficial and misleading. The mistake that men make is to take the poets seriously in the belief that poetry contains the truth about life, and is worthy to be studied in earnest; whereas, in his opinion, poetry and art never deal with anything real, but confine themselves to copying real things.

The grounds, on which is based his antagonism to the arts, are partly metaphysical, partly psychological. To begin with, he summons to his aid his doctrine of ideas, to show the relation of painting and poetry to reality. He takes for illustration a bed. To the bed, as to all particular things, there corresponds an Idea, of which any one bed is but a copy. When the carpenter manufactures a bed, he has in his mind the general

notion of what a bed is. This general notion is that character common to all the articles we call "beds," which is implied in giving the one name to them. Here, then, we have to distinguish between two existences—the bed. which is one of many beds, and the Idea of the bed, of which, as the original of the many beds, there is but one. Of the two, the bed which the carpenter constructs is the less real. It is but a copy of the Idea, whose maker is God. Suppose, now, that a painter makes a picture of the bed. This picture has an even lower degree of reality than the material bed; it is but the copy of a copy, on a level with the images that appear in a mirror. In this way, a picture gives no knowledge of what it represents. For the artist, as such, does not know the real nature of the things he pictures. The man who uses an article, say a bridle, knows its purpose and how it serves it; even the artisan, who makes it at the instructions of another man, must know something about the nature of the actual bridle. The artist, on the other hand, makes only a copy of it, and even as a copy his picture is defective, since it shows the object from a single point of view.

He does not have the Idea of the object before him; he copies equally well whether he understands what he is copying or not.

Poetry labours under the same disabilities. The poet also is a copyist, who does with words what the painter does with lines and colours. If a good poet, like Homer, really knew about the events he described, he would not be content with the representation of other men's deeds, but would seek to emulate them. But no great deeds are credited to Homer; he wrote of wars and of the administration of cities, but he himself was neither a great general nor a great statesman. " "Then must we not conclude that all writers of poetry, beginning with Homer, copy unsubstantial images of every subject about which they write, including virtue, and do not grasp the truth?"

Since then the works of the painter and of the poet are twice removed from reality, they are unworthy of the serious attention usually paid to them. But, Plato goes on to show, they are not merely trivial; they are also misleading. The painter copies things as they appear to the eye, in defiance of calculation

and reasoning, which show that they are different from what they seem. For example, he represents a stick that appears bent under water as though it were bent, in spite of the fact that he knows it to be straight. In this way he gives a reality to the illusions of sense which they do not deserve. The charge against the poet is still more grave, because of the greater influence which he exercises. Just as the painter misleads men by making them trust their sense perceptions, so the poet appeals to the emotions and gives them an authority which only reason should have. This is in part due to the fact that he finds his most dramatic material in the least worthy aspects of life. The calmness of demeanour with which the man of reason meets all the changes of life is not easily made a subject for poetry; it is rather in emotion, in sentiment and sensation, that interest can be secured. The poet, let us say, represents a good man suffering such a misfortune as the loss of a son. If he were guided by reason, the man v would be moderate in his expressions of grief. But it does not suit the poet's purpose to picture him so; he must be made interesting by his demonstrative grief.' Those who read or hear such poetry are encouraged by it to let the emotions rule their lives instead of reason. The poet must therefore be put on the same level as the painter; like him, he produces works which are worthless when tested by the standard of truth, and his presence in the state is a danger to it.

In this discussion, Plato places art on a distinctly lower level than he did when he considered it as a factor in education. He repeats with more psychological detail the view then expressed, that the representation of bad or unworthy things tends to make the citizens imitators of what is evil. But while in the earlier discussion he recognised that the beautiful productions of the artist and the poet have a value in the first stages of education above that of ordinary experience, he here denies to them even that superiority. This estimate of art, as less real than the things it represents, has doubtless a certain justification in the fact that it constantly tends to degenerate into a spiritless copying of its objects. Partly also it may be taken as a protest against the popular over-estimate of

poetry as an authority on the great questions of life. But after making all such allowances, the fact remains that Plato here does less than justice to the artist. The conception of art implied in making it a means of education, is at once more in harmony with Plato's view of the world and with modern thought. Pictures and poems so regarded are not less real than their objects, but more. To particular things, which as such fall far short of the reality of their Ideas, art gives a new and a higher value as symbols of the Ideas. The beautiful is not the true, but it suggests the true. And it is this which gives the works of the painter and the poet their power to draw out the soul and to help it on its way to the knowledge of the truth.

## Section 2.—The Immortality of the Soul.1

The conclusion of the discussion which ended with Book IX., was that it is in every way best for the soul to follow the path of virtue. Plato now carries this contention beyond the limits of the brief span of man's life in this world, to show that virtue has a

<sup>1</sup> X., 608-621.

still greater reward in its influence on the soul's destiny after death. This extension of the subject compels him to prove that the soul is immortal. This he does in a somewhat unsatisfactory argument,1 the basis of which is the same dualistic separation of body and soul as makes him speak (in the Phaedo), of death as the escape of the soul from the prison-house of the body. In this passage he insists that the soul in its own nature is simple. That it has lost this simplicity, as it manifests itself on earth, is due to its union with the body, which has brought upon it such a multitude of evils that it can only be compared to the sea-god whose natural form has disappeared in the tangle of adhering weeds and stones. It is only its love of wisdom which shows that original simplicity, in virtue of which it can be said to be eternal. Now, since body and soul are essentially diverse, nothing that merely affects the body can do the soul harm; and as moral evil, however it may disfigure the soul, does not make it cease to be, it follows that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Jowett speaks of this argument as "verbal." The argument in the *Phaedo* from the existence of eternal ideas in the soul, in which it is a partaker, is a more satisfactory one.

or soul to destroy it. Therefore, he concludes, the soul is immortal. This is substantially the argument which is worked out in the *Phaedrus*, to the effect that since the very essence of the soul is to be self-moved, to think and to live, it can never admit the opposite of these characters and die.

The Republic comes to an end with the tale of Er the Armenian, who, after being twelve days dead, returned to life, able to tell the story of his experiences in the other world. According to his story, the soul goes to a place of judgment immediately after death. Thence the just man is sent to enjoy a thousand years of bliss, and the unjust man to suffer a thousand years of purifying punishment. At the end of this time, the soul is brought before the three Fates to make choice of a new life. In this all-important choice, which fixes its destiny in its next existence beyond recall, the soul is free; and it is here that the character of the man who chooses shows itself. If his life on earth has been upright, he makes a wise choice, and his soul goes on its way to a higher life; wickedness on earth carries with it as its penalty a false choice which degrades the soul. After choosing, the soul drinks of the waters of forgetfulness, and the memory of the past vanishes away. Once more it is ready to enter into life by the gateway of birth, with its destiny fixed by a past of which it knows nothing.

The mythical language in which this section is couched leaves it doubtful how far Plato is to be taken literally. It seems clear that he believed in the immortality of the soul, but how much that meant for him it is difficult to say. It certainly did not imply a continuance of one personal consciousness through successive lives. Even the idea of a succession of personalities, bound together by the influence which each has upon all that come after it, must not be taken as a complete account of his view. Perhaps we understand Plato best by thinking of the tale of Er, not as a description of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Cf. the Phaedo (114): "I do not mean to affirm that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true; a man of sense hardly ought to say that. But I do say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily that something of the kind is true."

soul's fate after death, but as a parable, meant to bring home the responsibility which men have towards the generations that are to come after them. If the tale be viewed in this way, the emphasis is not to be laid on the statement that there is a fixed number of souls, which appear and reappear on earth, in forms that depend on a choice made between death and the next birth. Such details are the letter, not the spirit, of the story. The choice which fixes the destiny of the coming men is not one that is made once for all in the regions beyond, but a choice continually being made by every man. Hence it is at once the inspiration and the reward of the just man, to know that by living uprightly he is doing a good work not only for himself and for his fellows, but for the future of humanity.

# APPENDIX

#### AN OUTLINE OF THE REPUBLIC

What is Justice?—The opinion of the man of culture and of the Sophists as to the nature of Justice are stated and criticised.—I.-II., 367.

The Ideal State.—The views of the Sophists presuppose that the state is artificial. Plato refutes this opinion, and gives his own answer to the question about Justice by the construction of the Ideal State. He finds that in a properly organised state there are three classes :--

(a) Ordinary Citizens
 (b) Auxiliaries (Soldiers)
 (c) Guardians (Rulers)
 to which there {(a) The Appetites (b) Spirit (c) Reason

Both in the state and in the soul Justice consists in the harmony of the three elements, which is secured by each doing its own work.--II., 368-376; IV., 428-445.

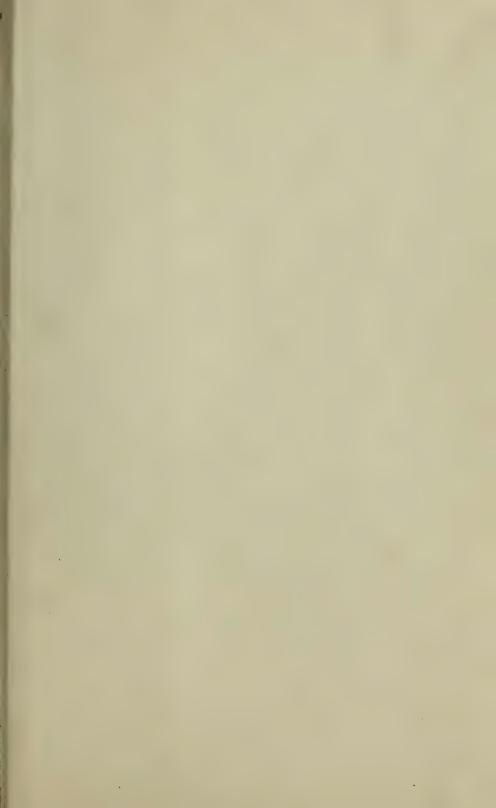
Three Stages in the construction of the Ideal State 1:

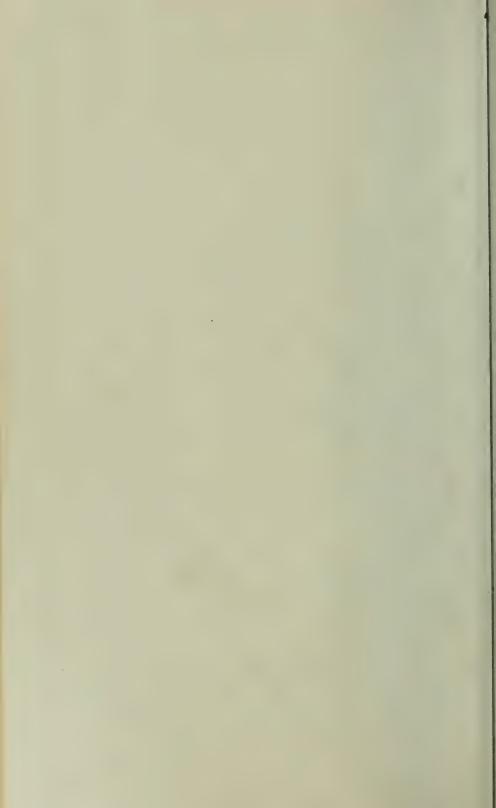
<sup>1</sup> The sequence of stages has no reference to time: they mark the successive advances in the conception of the state as the discussion goes on.

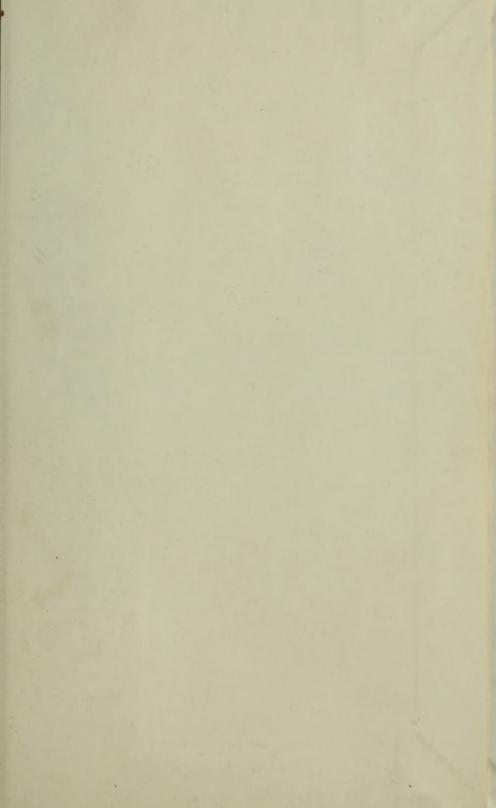
- (1) The first stage is the ordinary Greek state somewhat modified. It is an aristocracy of intellect in which the citizens of superior capacity are made soldiers or rulers, and specially trained by means of Music and Gymnastic.—III., 376-415.
- (2) At the second stage the guardians are put under a communistic system and deprived of personal property and family life.—III., 415—IV., 427; V., 449-471.
- (3) The third stage is the Philosophic City in which the philosopher is king. Those men who show the philosophical spirit are trained to be rulers by an education which leads up through Science to Philosophy.—V., 471—VII., 541.

The Imperfect States.—The states which result when the three classes do not keep their proper places in the government are then discussed. These are, in ascending order of badness: (a) Timocracy, (b) Oligarchy, (c) Democracy, and (d) Despotism.—Books VIII. and IX.

Book X. is made up of two fragments. The first part deals with art; the second treats of the immortality of the soul.









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